रामकथा लोकेषु प्रचरिष्यति

ASIAN
VARIATIONS
IN RAMAYANA

Sahitya Akademi's Second International Ramayana Seminar that was held in New Delhi from 8 to 10 January 1981 was, as it were, another significant step in the great and unique work in progress to gather, assess and conserve the many-limbed diverse-splendoured Ramayana heritage and to stimulate further purposeful diffusion of the glory and grace of the Ramayana in its varied forms, facets and formulations. The theme of the Seminar—'Variations in Ramayana in Asia: Their Cultural, Social and Anthropological Significance'—was an invitation to probe the wide-spread Ramayana phenomenon in its racial origins, its susceptibility to local religious beliefs and social mores, and its yet deeper filiations with geography and circumambient Nature. The Seminar-participants numbered about twenty-five, and there were six sessions (besides the Inaugural) when over 20 papers were presented.

The Ramayana Seminar of 1981 was a milestone in Ramayana studies, like the earlier Seminar of 1975. The home of origins, the ultimate reservoir, is the Indian subcontinent with its own several living languages and literatures and rich local traditions.

This collection of the Seminar papers is presented here by Prof. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar with his comprehensive Introduction.

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ASIAN VARIATIONS IN RAMAYANA

Papers presented at the International Seminar on 'Variations in Ramayana in Asia: Their Cultural, Social and Anthropological Significance': New Delhi, January 1981

Edited, with an Introduction, by
K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

SAHITYA AKADEMI

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Sahitya Akademi

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PREFACE

I felt honoured, if also embarrassed, when I was asked to edit the papers presented at Sahitya Akademi's Second International Ramayana Seminar in New Delhi in January 1981. I had participated in the earlier Ramayana Seminar of 1975, but I didn't attend the more recent one ; and this was doubtless a handicap. And, besides, stenographers' reports of the actual discussions were not available. Accordingly, what is here brought together is by no means a complete record of the proceedings of the Seminar.

The savants who took part in the Seminar were drawn from different parts of India and Southeast Asia, and the spellings of proper names in some of the papers conform to local usage. Such surface variations are a bye-law of the ground of underlying unity, and no attempt therefore has been made here to impose a cast-iron uniformity. Further, owing to the long distances involved, it has not been possible to enter into any detailed correspondence with the concerned scholars.

In my Introduction, I have tried to present an integrated summary of both the Sahitya Akademi Seminars in the broader context of Ramayana studies.

Two of the eminent participants—Prof. Jean Filliozat and Dr. C. Sivaramamurti—passed away while the volume was in the press. This is a great loss indeed to the world of Ramayana studies and Indological scholarship.

I am happy to record my gratitude to Dr. S. S. Janaki, Director, Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, Madras, for ready help and advice, and especially for shouldering the burden of proofreading and seeing the book through the press. I may add that she had also helped to see through the press the earlier volume, *The Ramayana Tradition in Asia*, edited by the late Dr. V. Raghavan.

Nor should I fail to add a word of thanks to the Diocesan Press, Madras, for their expertise in printing and producing this volume.

Madras
April 1983

K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

INTERNATIONAL RAMAYANA SEMINAR

VARIATIONS IN RAMAYANA IN ASIA : THEIR CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

NEW DELHI : 8 - 10 JANUARY 1981

PROGRAMME

8 January 1981

Inaugural Session 11 a.m.

Welcome Address

PROF. UMASHANKAR JOSHI,
President, Sahitya Akademi.

Inaugural Address

SRI M. HIDAYATULLAH,
Vice-President, Republic of India.

Vote of Thanks

DR. R. S. KELKAR,
Secretary, Sahitya Akademi.

8 January 1981

1st Session 12.00 noon to 1.30 p.m.

Chairman—Fr. Camille Bulcke

Speaker	*Subject*
1. Dr. C. Sivaramamurti	—Ramayana in Inscriptions
2. Dr. Umakant P. Shah	—Ramayana in Jaina Tradition

2nd Session 2.30 p.m. to 5.15 p.m.

Chairman—Dr. Francis Bizot

Speaker	*Subject*
1. Dr. Soewito Santoso	—The Glory of Rama's Crown
2. Prof. H. B. Sarkar	—The Ramayana in South-East Asia : A General Survey
3. Prof. J. W. de Jong	—The Story of Rama in Tibet
4. Prof. Vidya Niwas Misra	—The Rama story in Indian Folklore : Some Significant Innovations.
5. Prof. A. N. Jani	—Different versions of Valmiki's Ramayana in Sanskrit

9 January 1981

3rd Session 10.00 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.

Chairman—Prof. Minoru Hara

Speaker	*Subject*
1. Prof. Singaravelu	—The Literary Version of the Rama Story in Malay
2. Dr. Sachchidanand Sahai	—Indo-Chinese Geography as described in the *Phra Lak Phra Lam* : A Laotian Version of the Ramayana
3. Sri B. D. Tiwari	—Hindi Versions of the Ramayana

4th Session 2.30 p.m. to 5.15 p.m.

Chairman—Dr. Soewito Santoso

Speaker	*Subject*
1. Prof. Minoru Hara	—Rama Stories in China and Japan : A Comparison
2. Sri Niranjan Goswami	—A Folk Painted Manuscript of the Ramacaritamanasa
3. Dr. Ghulam Sarwar Yousof	—Ramayana Branch Stories in the *Wayang Siam* Shadow Play in Malaysia
4. Dr. C. Margabandhu	—Ramayana reliefs in stone in Rajasthan Temples.

10 January 1981

5th Session 10 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.

Chairman—Prof. Jean Filliozat

Speaker	*Subject*
1. Dr. Francis Bizot	—The Reamker
2. Sri N. R. Banerjee	—The Ramayana theme in Nepalese Art
3. Smt. Kamala Ratnam	—Socio-cultural and Anthropological Background of the Ramayana in Laos
4. Dr. (Mrs.) Saveros Pou	—Ramakertian Studies

6th Session 2.30 p.m. to 5.15 p.m.

Chairman—Prof. J. W. de Jong

Speaker	*Subject*
1. Prof. Jean Filliozat	—The Ramayana in Southeast Asian Sanskrit Epigraphy and Iconography
2. Dr. A. K. Das	—Notes on the Emperor Akbar's manuscript of the Persian Ramayana
3. Sri H. C. Bhayani	—The Prakrit and Apabhramsa Ramayanas

Summing up : Prof. Umashankar Joshi

Vote of Thanks : Dr. R. S. Kelkar

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INTRODUCTION

I

SEVEN years ago, from 8 to 10 December 1975, Sahitya Akademi (in association with the Union Ministry of Education) held an International Seminar on 'The Ramayana Tradition in Asia', in celebration of the 400th year of the composition of Tulsidasa's Ramacharitamanasa. An earlier International Ramayana Seminar had been held in Indonesia in 1971, followed next year by the First International Sanskrit Conference in Delhi. Although the Ramayana and the Adi-Kavi needed no special boost, it was nevertheless gratifying that remembrance and appreciation and gratitude took such cooperative and purposive forms. Some of the asseverations, indeed, must have both startled and deeply satisfied the attentive listeners. Thus, for example, Dr. Amin Sweeney of the University of Malaya :

> '. . .the characters of the Lord Rama, his lady Sita, and their loyal followers still come to life nightly on the shadow screens of the north-west Malaysia where the performance of a good *dalang* can still draw a larger audience than a local open-air cinema showing the latest in Hollywood coco-cola culture.'[1]

And thus U. Thein Han, Chairman of the Burma Historical Commission :

> 'It (the Ramayana) is not only a literary treasure but also a source of ennobling influence on the relationships of men as parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, relations and friends, teachers and pupils, and rulers and the ruled.'[2]

If Malaysia with its dominant Muslim and Burma with its Buddhist population can still respond thus to the influence of the Ramayana, this ambience is clearly something that transcends mere region, race, religion, language or the vicissitudes of time and local history.

The 1975 Seminar on 'The Ramayana Tradition in Asia' had eleven sessions (including the Inaugural) and nearly 50 delegates participated in its deliberations. The welcome speech by the President, Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the inaugural address by Prof. Nurul Hasan, and Dr. V. Raghavan's words keyed to the occasion defined the scope and set the tone of the Seminar. Whether or not the Ramayana of Valmiki constitutes in some measure a factual record of what had once happened, this much is a continuing fact of our national experience : the exile of Rama from Ayodhya on the eve of his expected coronation, the poignant meeting of Rama and Bharata at Chitrakuta, the abduction of Sita, the Vali-Sugriva fratricidal conflict, Hanuman's flight to Lanka and the finding of Sita, the ensuing war and the killing of Ravana, and Sita's trial by fire and reunion with her Lord and their coronation in Ayodhya are closer to reality in the popular imagination than any expanse of recorded history. And Rama, Sita, Lakshmana : Bharata, Guha : Anasuya, Sabari : Vali, Sugriva, Hanuman : Ravana, Vibhishana, Indrajit : Tara, Mandodari, Trijata—these are not just a poet's creations but verily apocalyptic projections of humanity's deepest intuitions and ecstasies.

What is, perhaps, even more astonishing than the universal vogue and nectarean role of the Ramayana in India is the general diffusion of the story all over the world. Even as, in India, the Hindu, Buddhist, Jaina and other Ramayana versions vary from one another, just as the numberless folk renderings and evocations in the plastic and the performing arts reveal a tantalising versatility in the handling of the Rama-Sita-Ravana theme, the legend has likewise undergone countless variations in the process of diffusion or transplantation abroad to the several far-flung countries of Asia. Like the Purusha's 1000 heads, or 1000 feet, equally defying enumeration or comprehension are the thematic changes, adaptations, elaborations, deviations, transmigrations and even Bottom-like 'translations' of the original Ramayana legend. But there is also, defying all the alterations and the aberrations, the electrifying unifying essence, the home-of-all powerhouse-of-all in the Adi-Kavi's poetic testament. What the distinguished assembly of scholars, savants and Rasikas gathered in New Delhi in the 400th year of Tulsidasa's Ramacharitamanasa tried to do was to study this uniquely fascinating phenomenon of the Ramayana story's transmission, proliferation and transmutation, and its lodgement in hundreds of millions of human hearts and sensibilities. The papers presented at the Seminar comprised evaluations of the Ramayana recensions, versions or traditions in Sanskrit, in the Jataka tales, in the Jaina works, in Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, in Hindi, Gujarati, Kashmiri, Punjabi, in Assamese, Manipuri, Bengali, Oriya, in Nepal, Mongolia, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Laos, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, as also in inscriptions, sculptures, paintings and the performing arts. Speaking in general terms, Suniti Kumar Chatterji declared that the Ramayana, in some local version or another, had become established in the countries of Southeast Asia 'almost as a national epic as much as in India'. Lokesh Chandra added: 'The Ramayana has become the lyric of the men of Asia from Siberia to Indonesia, filling their unbounded Self with ecstasy, with an ocean of bliss.'[3] Harry H. Buck confessed that, for 15 years, he had been 'fascinated by Rama', and declared further: 'Ramayana to me is human experience'.[4] Of the Ramayana's wholly salutary impact on the people of India, Fr. C. Bulcke said:

> 'The popularity of the Valmiki Ramayana and the voluminous Rama-Literature of many centuries is a monument to the idealism of India, its high esteem of moral values and its belief in the ultimate triumph of good over evil. In the same way, the enthusiastic response of the millions of northern India to the message of Ramacharitamanasa testifies to the deep-seated religious belief and spontaneous piety of the soul of India.'[5]

And thus Kapila Vatsyayan, on the beneficial vogue of the Ramayana beyond India's borders:

> 'The story of Rama seems to have bewitched and hypnotised generations of Asians belonging to countries with different religious, literary and cultural traditions. . . Its popularity has not been confined to the traditional framework, but has impregnated a variety of modern media, such as comics, film strips, feature films, documentaries and the rest.'[6]

On the last day of the Seminar, 12 December 1975, the Organising Committee resolved that the Proceedings should be published in due course, and further that a central repository of Ramayana materials be built up, classified and catalogued under Sahitya

Akademi's auspices 'so that the same could be supplied through microfilms or other means to Ramayana scholars all over the world'; and also that a Project be undertaken with international cooperation in respect of 'a concordance and variorum of Ramayana characters, episodes and motifs'.

The papers presented at the 1975 Seminar—forty-four in all—have since been published, as edited by the late Dr. V. Raghavan, with the title *The Ramayana Tradition in Asia* (1980). In the meantime, Sahitya Akademi undertook on behalf of the Union Academique Internationale the formidable but worthwhile project of compiling a critical inventory of Ramayana studies—'Inventtaire raisonne des Etudes du Ramayana'—in the world. In furtherance of this project, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations sponsored a tour by Dr. R. S. Kelkar, Secretary of Sahitya Akademi, from 1 to 14 March 1980, enabling him to visit universities and cultural organisations, and establish contacts with Ramayana scholars in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. During his tour, Dr. Kelkar visited Hindu and Buddhist temples, studied modes of worship, learnt of local history and of the interaction of Indian and Thai or Malaysian or Indonesian culture, saw paintings and sculptures in museums and private galleries, held meaningful discussions with Ramayana scholars, gathered valuable information relating to possible preliminary regional inventories of Ramayana material, witnessed performances with a mythological slant, and be it at Bangkok, Djakarta, Bali, Singapore, or Kuala Lumpur made the most of his stay to further the objective of the tour It was also a preparation for the Second International Ramayana Seminar.

II

Sahitya Akademi's Second International Ramayana Seminar that was held in New Delhi from 8 to 10 January 1981 was, as it were, another significant step in the great and unique work in progress to gather, assess and conserve the many-limbed diverse-splendoured Ramayana heritage, and to stimulate further purposeful diffusion of the glory and grace of the Ramayana in its varied forms, facets and formulations. The theme of the Seminar—'Variations in Ramayana in Asia : Their Cultural, Social and Anthropological

Significance '—was an invitation to probe the wide-spread Ramayana phenomenon in its racial origins, its susceptibility to local religious beliefs and social mores, and its yet deeper filiations with geography and circumambient Nature. The Seminar-participants numbered about twenty-five, and there were six sessions (besides the Inaugural) when over 20 papers were presented. Welcoming the delegates, Prof. Umashankar Joshi, President of Sahitya Akademi, pointed out that, of the five great Indian classics that have travelled abroad 'where they eventually got more or less adopted and adapted', *Panchatantra* and *Brihatkatha* have gone mainly to the Western world, and *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and the *Jataka-kathas* have turned to the Eastern world. And Ramacharita is also Sita-charita whose *adhara-sruti* is the poignant cry of the bereaved female krauncha bird moaning the sad music of humanity :

> 'This cry, at the heart of the Ramayana, is what has made it so appealing a poem to peoples of various regions and lands.'

In his Inaugural Address, Justice M. Hidayatullah, Vice-President of India, pointed out that, notwithstanding the variations in the process of transmission, 'the central theme of the epic, however, has remained the same—the upholding of Dharma, which alone can save mankind from error and extinction'. He laid stress on the role of a classic like the Ramayana in times like ours :

> 'When stress is laid nowadays on the study of sciences, pure and applied, a study of the classics raises the quality of public judgement and conduct, and reconciles the disorders of modern life.'

And, in particular, the Ramayana 'gives to our youth the fundamentals of our culture. . .it contains a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations'.

Of the 21 papers presented during the six sessions, five were on the Ramayana versions in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsa, and Hindi ; one on a manuscript of Ramacharitamanasa with illustrations, and another on Ramayana reliefs in stone in Rajasthani temples ; one on Emperor Akbar's manuscript of the Persian Ramayana ; one each on the Rama theme in Nepali art and in Tibet ; one on Ramayana inscriptions, mainly in India, and another on the Ramayana in Southeast Asia epigraphy and iconography ; a general survey of the Ramayana in Southeast Asia, followed by two papers relating to Laos, two to Cambodia, two to Malaysia, one to Indonesia, and one to China and Japan. The coverage is Southeast Asia as a whole, and more specifically India, Tibet, Nepal, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, China and Japan. Serious literature, folk lore, epigraphy, iconography, the plastic and performing arts, all come within the purview of the learned papers, and the opulent and variegated Ramayana heritage is seen in relation to the different lands and their peoples, and vistas of comparative appreciation are thrown open, and the obscure processes of cultural cross-fertilisation are exemplified by the ramifications of the Rama story in the many Southeast-Asian countries. Twenty-one scholars : twenty-one more or less diversified themes : yet the ensemble doesn't fail to make a cumulative appeal of its own insinuating the glory of the Ramayana diapason.

Like Dr. V. Raghavan's comprehensive survey 'The Ramayana in Sanskrit Literature' at the earlier Seminar, Dr. A. N. Jani's paper on the different Ramayana versions in Sanskrit takes a wide sweep, shows how the story finds mention in one way or another—in longer or shorter form—in the Mahabharata (at four different places), in religious literature (say, Pancharatra works like Agastya Samhita), in certain Upanishads, and in several Puranas main and subordinate. Of the independent versions, pointed attention is drawn to Yoga Vasishtha, Adhyatma Ramayana, Adbhuta Ramayana, Bhusundi Ramayana, Maha Ramayana and Vedanta Ramayana. Dr. Raghavan had remarked earlier that 'to attempt to describe the Ramayana in Sanskrit literature would be like attempting to describe the immanence of God in creation'.[7] Dr. Jani's is a gallant attempt to accomplish the impossible, and is accordingly weighted with detailed information about the diverse Ramayanas in Sanskrit, and the abundant Ramayana fall-out on the expanses of religious writing in Sanskrit and classical Sanskrit literature.

Again, like Sri V. M. Kulkarni's 'Jain Ramayanas and their Source' in the 1975 Seminar, Dr. Umakant P. Shah's 'Ramayana in Jaina Tradition' is an admirably comprehensive review of the entire corpus; from Vimala Suri's Pauma-chariya in Ardha-magadhi (3rd or 4th century A.D.), Jaina Ramayanas appeared in steady succession for almost 1500 years, but both Kulkarni and Shah agree that the Jaina but followed the Hindu Ramayana tradition, Kulkarni had said: 'Chronologically the Jain versions come definitely later than the Hindu Ramayana'[8]; Shah remarks, if more guardedly: '. . . it is fairly certain that all the Jaina sources as available today are later than the Hindu sources'. Shah also agrees with Kulkarni in not accepting D. E. Sen's view regarding an independent Southern or Dravidian tradition of the Ramayana story making a hero, not of Rama, but of Ravana. Shah refers too to Jaina Ramayanas in Kannada, like Pampa Ramayana by Nagachandra (11th century). The Jain versions seem to minimise the supernatural, humanise the Vanaras and the Rakshasas (both are Vidyadharas !), and make Kaikeyi, Vali and Ravana rather less unattractive than in the Sanskrit versions. There is of course the Jainistic bias, but not to the point of making the story unrecognisable.

In his paper 'The Prakrit and Apabhramsa Ramayanas'[9], Mr. H. C. Bhayani refers to possible 'Brahmanic' or Hindu (i.e., non-Jaina) Ramayanas in the Prakrit and Apabhramsa languages, and mentions in particular one version by Caumuha (Chaturmukha) of the 7th or 8th century but adds:

> 'As the works of Chaturmukha and others of the Brahmanic tradition are lost, nothing can be said about their departures, if any, from Valmiki's version.'

As regards the spirit and atmosphere pervading the Jaina Ramayanas, Bhayani makes the following points:

> 'Omission of the typically Brahmanical episodes like the legends of Vasishtha and Visvamitra, Agastya, etc.; addition of anti-Brahmanical legends pertaining to the origin of sacrifice and Ravana's destruction of Narutta's sacrifice; addition of episodes implying devotion to and veneration for Jaina religion; interspersing the narrative with sermons of Jain monks, as worshipping Jaina shrines and holy places; describing past and future births of the characters wherein the functioning of the Law of Karma is given Jainistic prominence; the emphasis throughout on the doctrine of *ahimsa*: all these create a characteristic Jain atmosphere.'

On the other hand, great literature transcends doctrinal adhesions and soars in the higher regions and appeals to universal humanity. For the rest, responding to the twists and turns of place, time and predicament, changes come about mainly in the externals, and a great story like the Ramayana just takes these in its stride

Writing with an impressive wealth of knowledge on 'Hindi versions of the Ramayana', Prof. Bhagawandas Tiwari cites James Hastings's view that 'no work of world literature, secular in its origin, has ever produced so profound an influence on the life and thought of a people, as the Ramayana', and affirms that as regards the number of versions and offshoots of the Ramayana in Hindi during the last four centuries, 'no language in the world can equal Hindi'. After commenting on the opulence, variety and versatility of the Ramayana versions in Hindi, Tiwari concludes with this peroration :

> 'It (the Ramayana) has influenced the life, literature, arts, ethics and the individual, social, political and cultural thought of the entire Hindi speaking population of India. Its various versions are devotion-oriented, and the devotees of Rama see him in each and every aspect of human life. .. It is not only a story of Rama and Ravana. . .but it is a story of the good and evil aspects of human life.'

While Tiwari mentions incidentally the folklorist dimensions to the Hindi Ramayana heritage, Prof. Vidya Niwas Misra underlines and elaborates in his paper some 'significant' innovations in the popular or everyday experience of the Rama-Sita story. The shared communal possession of almost 150 million Awadhi, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Baghehali and Kannauji people, this elan vital of folklore seems almost to mingle with their blood-streams and respond to their heart-beats. Rama is no mere heroic hero of an epic recital, he is much more :

> 'He is a companion in every pilgrimage, he bears the brunt of the everyday sorrow of every man and woman. Rama is an eternal presence.'

In the songs cited by Prof. Misra, Sita is the insulted and injured wife, and on being rebuffed by her, Rama the hero becomes 'a lonely man. . . more human, more intimate and more a person belonging to ourselves : so that Rama's loneliness is our loneliness, and our tragedy of wrong decisions is Rama's tragedy'. But the drought and quietude of this loneliness can still be a prelude to a new spring, a new life.

III

When we talk of books today, we have in mind well-preserved and attractively bound volumes, but there was a time when memory was the preserver of literature, and presently superb calligraphy came into play. And sacred books were not only read or recited with reverent care, but also ritualistically treasured and worshipped. It is not surprising therefore that Sri Niranjan Goswami describes in his paper a folk painted manuscript of Ramacharitamanasa, now in the Ashutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University. The copy—a fairly faithful one—was made between 1772-3 by Sri Ichharama Misra for the widowed Rani Janaki, a religious person who built many temples. The MS is illustrated by 153 paintings, and perhaps some others have been lost. Narration being the purpose of the illustrations, ' the main focus of attention is invariably drawn towards the representation of human figures '. The men wear beard and moustache, and women wear richly coloured pyjamas reaching the ankles. ' A sense of dynamic movement ' is seen in the paintings, only two of which—' The first meeting of Rama and Sita ' and ' Rama and his party being driven to the forest by Sumantra '—are reproduced in this volume with Goswami's appreciative comments.

Dr. C. Margabandhu's paper on the Ramayana reliefs in stone in Rajasthan Temples is an art-study of a latter-day phenomenon, when the exploits of Rama and his exemplary qualities were often sought to be linked with the lives and exploits of local royalty. Even more to the point was the fact that Ramakatha, with its literary associations and broad human appeal, was gaining in popularity, and at the same time was being viewed as a sacred theme befitting representation within the precincts of temples :

> ' Hence the epic theme finds a place in equal proportions to the other main art and iconic elements which themselves reveal the spread of the *bhakti* cult, and the narrative seems to have taken a deep root in the minds of the people. '

In this volume, four of the stone reliefs are given as illustrations : (1) Rama freeing Ahalya (Deogarh Temple) ; (2) Lakshmana deforming Surpanakha (Deogarh Temple) ; (3) Ravana as a recluse begging alms from Sita (Nachna Temple) and (4) Rama and Lakshmana surrounded by monkeys (Chausa near Buxar).

Dr. A. K. Das's ' Notes on the Emperor Akbar's Manuscript of the Persian Ramayana' is another fascinating exploration of the filiations between literature and the art of painting. With a view to ending ' the fanatical hatred prevailing between Hindus and Mussalmans ', Akbar encouraged the translation of Hindu classics like the Mahabharata and the Ramayana into Persian. After this was done, they were illustrated in the Mughal style of painting. Thus the Persian Ramayana, the work of Bada'oni, had 176 miniatures. Although most of the artists were Hindus, still it was now an effort for them, having been brought up in the Mughal style of painting, to turn from Persian to Hindu themes. And what was the result ? Dr. Das comments as follows :

> ' The Ramayana story as painted by the Akbari painters appears more like a contemporary event where the principal characters wear Mughal court costumes, use current weapons and move about in palaces and cities built more like Akbar's new capital city of Fatepur Sikri. . . The atmosphere is more rarefied and orderly than expected in the story of a noble Prince's victory over the demons, except in the long series of battle-scenes. . .where the pervading mood is one of tension and drama.'

Dr. N. R. Banerjee, writing on ' The Ramayana theme in Napalese Art ', notes that, although Janakpur in Nepal had once been King Janaka's capital, ' the theme of Ramayana or even the cult image of Rama as an avatara of Vishnu is not much to be met with in the early, or medieval art of Nepal '. No doubt inscriptional evidence going back to the 8th century indicates ' a fairly detailed acquaintance ' with the Ramayana story, and there are the modern sculptors of Rama and Sita in the Rama-Janaki Temple at Janakpur. A reference is also made to the Ramayana theme figuring in three registers in Nautale Durbar of the Hanuman Dhoka Palace : (1) Rama, Sita, Lakshmana—and Sita's abduction ; (2) Tara bemoaning the death of Vali—and Hanuman's flight to Lanka ; and (3) Hanuman before Ravana, the burning of Lanka, and the report to Rama and Lakshmana.

In his paper on ' The story of Rama in Tibet ', Prof. J. W. de Jong refers to six incomplete manuscripts of a version going back to the 8th century, and comprising two recensions. The story begins in Dasagriva's (Ravana's) Lankapura ; Sita is his daughter, who is cast away on the waters in a copper box, and is found and nurtured by Indian peasants. Married to Rama, she becomes Queen Sita. The subsequent exile, the abduction of Sita, the alliance with Sugriva, the mission of Hanumanta, and the defeat of Dasagriva follow. After all the misunderstandings, Rama lives happily with Sita and their two sons. In another, and perhaps less authentic version of the story by Dmar-ston Chos-rgyal, there are odd details like Hanuman's visit to the Wind-God, Vayu. Yet other versions figure in commentaries on Dandin's *Kavyadarsa* by Sanghamsri and Rin-spuns-pa, the one by the latter being more ' orthodox ' than the former's, which is described as ' rather aberrant '. In Rin-spuns-pa's version, it is prophesied that Rama (Ramana) will take birth again in the Kali Age as the Buddha, and incarnation of Vishnu.

In his ' Ramayana in Inscriptions ', Dr. C. Sivaramamurti shows with citations and elucidations how the influence of Valmiki Ramayana is reflected in the wealth of inscriptional evidence—memorials to Kings, gifts of land, etc.—in India and even abroad. This paper is, as it were, complementary to D. C. Sircar's ' Ramayana in Inscriptions ' in the 1975 Seminar. The Ramayana of Valmiki being universal currency once, his words were used by ' scholar, poet, connoisseur, layman or devotee, peasant or king '. Having directly shaped classical writers like Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti and Bana, Valmiki influenced—directly or through them—most others as well. Outside India, ' wherever Sanskrit has flourished, Valmiki's poetry has been the main inspiration '. And Dr. Sivaramamurti concludes :

> ' It is a vast study, very interesting, very fruitful, revealing the tremendous influence of the Adi-Kavi in every place in Asia where Indian thought has travelled.'

Carrying the discussion farther, Prof. Jean Filliozat writes on ' The Ramayana in Southeast Asian Epigraphy and Iconography '. The written or oral versions of the Rama story as they have come to us may be ' rather modern works ', but knowledge of Valmiki goes back to at least the 3rd century A.D., as shown by an inscription in Vietnam engraved by descendants of a Tamil King :

> ' Sanskrit alone, in those days, was an all-India language, used even in foreign countries as a link language, because it was

> taught and known at least by some persons in every country. Also the easiest way to reach Southeast Asia was from Pandyan coasts or from Lanka to Sumatra . . . '.

Doubtless there are indications of versions of the Ramayana other than Valmiki's influencing the local arts, but Prof. Filliozat feels sure that 'Valmiki's text has been the main original tool of propagation of the Ramaic legends in Southeast Asia '.

IV

At the 1975 Seminar, Prof. Himansu Bhusan Sarkar presented a paper on ' The Migration of the Ramayana Story to Indonesia '. At the more recent Seminar, Prof. Sarcar attempted a ' general survey ' of ' The Ramayana in Southeast Asia '. ' That word " Ramayana " ', says Reginald le May, ' also recalls the immense debt due to India by all the lands of Southeast Asia which today comprise Indonesia, the Malayan peninsula, Thailand and what used to be French Indo-China during colonial times '.[10] It is possible the cultural or Ramayana invasion from India was first felt and assimilated in Malaya, then drifted to the mainland of Southeast Asia from the 6th century onwards, and was felt all over the area in a few more centuries' time. Some of the local Ramayana versions were for the learned, but many were for the common people ; and both essayed mutually beneficial co-existence. In course of time, the Islamic rule in India and the decline of Sanskrit on the one hand, and, on the other, the coming of Islam to Malaya and Buddhism to Indo-China was to erode the importance of Sanskrit in Southeast Asia. In course of time, however, the dying old and the developing new succeeded in creating a new style of living, not rejecting the past, but adapting it ' to suit the conditions of contemporary life '.

Now for the individual countries, and first, Laos. Dr. Sachchidanand Sahai had earlier presented a paper on ' The Khvay Thuaraphi '[11], one of the two Ramayana variations current in Laos, the other (and longer) being *Phra Lak Phra Lam* (' Beloved Lakshman, Beloved Ram '). The latter was edited by Sahai and published for the first time in two volumes in 1973 by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. ' Pha Lak Pha Lam ' or *Phra*

Lak Phra Lam, composed in early 19th century, was discussed by Prof. (Smt.) Kamala Ratnam at the 1975 Seminar, and she also listed and described the 29 murals on the walls of the Central Hall of the Vat oup Muong that visually set forth the Vientiane version of the Ramayana story. In his paper for the 1981 Seminar, Sahai studies *Phra Lak Phra Lam* from the angle of Indo-Chinese geography :

> ' Around a small nucleus of the Rama story, a Lao author appears to have elaborated his narrative in order to describe the milieu in which he lived. '

The result is that the Ramayana theme gets ' completely transformed to suit the conditions of the new country '. It is as though the Ramayana action had taken place in Laos, and especially of middle Laos or the Mekong valley.

In her new paper ' Socio-cultural and Anthropological Background of the Ramayana in Laos ', Prof. Kamala Ratnam takes note of both the longer and shorter versions, as also of the Thai and Cambodian Ramayanas that are older and nearer to Valmiki. Although Laos seems to have received the Ramayana from India in successive waves via Burma, Thailand and Cambodia till the 13th century, it was only after the 18th that local versions came to be composed daubed with plenty of local colour. And, indeed, *Phra Lak Phra Lam* and *Khvay Thuaraphi* seem to have become almost an encyclopaedia of Laotian language and customs and geography. If the Thai Ramayana (' Ramakirti ' or ' Ramakien ') is full of fights, *Khvay Thuaraphi* (' Gvay Dvorahbi ') takes its name from Vali's fight with Dundubhi. This is significant because ' the water-buffalo is the main instrument of agriculture in Laos '. The action itself, involving the fortunes of three princely Houses (corresponding to the Valmikian Ayodhya, Kishkindha and Lanka), as it is unfolded in the Lao epic is ' strongly reminiscent of events between 1711 and 1731 A.D. when Laos had split into 3 parts and a separate Prince was ruling in each part '. The local colourings and the bizarre deviations in the story notwithstanding, the Laos Ramayana versions manage to retain their vital links with the Valmikian spiritual powerhouse, and continue to affirm eternal Providence, the certainty of the ultimate triumph of Good over Evil, and the surpassing of the everyday notion of death.

The Cambodian (Khmer) Ramayana is the theme of 2 papers, 'Ramakertian Studies' by Dr. (Mrs.) Saveros Pou and 'The Reamker' by Dr. F. Bizot. In Cambodian as in other Southeast Asian countries, the coming of the Ramayana preceded by centuries local compositions on the Rama theme, and it was only from the XV century onwards that it increasingly came to inspire the local bards to compelling utterance. They sang in particular about Rama's 'kerti' or many-faceted glory: hence 'Ramakerti' (or 'Reamker'). The history, the 'ayana' or 'path', are doubtless important, but all culminate in the glory of Rama whom a divine heroism hedges no matter in which way you prefer to look at the different episodes of his life. From a Ramayana prototype that was a gift from India (traces of which can be found in epigraphy and iconography), it branched off into two streams—the Khmer 'Ramakerti' and the Thai 'Ramakien'; and later, with possible infusions from Javanese and Thai sources, the subsequent Khmer 'Ramakerti' seems to have grown in association with post-Angkor-vat art:

> 'The popularisation of the epic—the main implications of which are the lax ethics and a lesser literary concern—has left Ram untouched and unblemished. He remains the same virtuous and righteous hero, far above all the vagaries of human imagination. And that is the mark of Ramakertian heritage, as a true Khmer tradition.'

Rama's majestic and lofty heroism remains part of the Cambodian national ideal, but also integrated with the ethical high seriousness of the Buddha and the luminous wisdom of the Bodhisattva.

In his paper, Dr. F. Bizot tells the fascinating story of how Mi Chak was ordained monk at Angkor-vat in 1920, how he read and memorised the 'Reamker' ('Ramakerti') from a voluminous manuscript on latanier leaves, and how, after leaving the monastery he took to farming, and performed at village festivals reciting from memory the entire epic. When Bizot met him in 1969, Mi Chak recited the epic again taking in all 50 hours, 'bringing alive the beauty of the poem by word and gesture'. The version Mi Chak memorised seems to have derived from Valmiki as well as other Sanskrit and Jaina sources. Dr. Bizot finds in Mi Chak's 'Reamker' no attempt (as in the Laotian versions) to graft on the original theme local preoccupations and motivations. Dr. Bizot not only indicates the organic thematic filaments in divers versions that fuse into the 'Reamker', he also probes the inner spiritual meaning of the epic. Rama is *chit*, Lakshmana is the mind-force, Hanuman is the breath or vital force, and Sita is the 'crystal globe' or eternal soul. After all the alarums, scissions and frustrations, the sundered come together at last to forge a radiant harmony and unity.

Prof. S. Singaravelu's paper is a critical study of 'Hikayat Seri-Ram' (HSR) or the Chronicle of Sri Rama, a long and comprehensive Malay version in prose by an unknown author who lived between the 13th and 17th centuries. The different recensions now available nevertheless seem to have much in common, thereby indicating that 'all these texts were apparently derived from some older version', which again owed its form and content, not only to the Ramayana of Valmiki and perhaps Kamban's epic in Tamil as well, but also 'diverse textual and oral legendary sources such as the Puranas and popular tales'. On a total view, HSR seems to be, understandably enough, less Hindu than the Hindu versions (for example, the Vishnu-avatara aspect of Rama is usually muted), and a good deal is in consonance with local traditions and customs. One of the recensions is called 'Hikayat Maharaja Rawana', in which 'some episodes relating to the antecedents of Ravana have been remoulded on Islamic lines'. Prof. Singaravelu also shows, with the help of a diagram, how the chief characters—Rama, Sita, Ravana, Vali, Sugriva, Hanuman—are involved in one another in a tantalising pattern of blood-relationships. The innovations and changes in the story, motifs and characterisation are indeed many, but there is a fusion of received and local elements, folk and living traditions, and the result is described as 'a highly developed and well-balanced' whole.

At the 1975 Seminar, Dr. Amin Sweeney gave a masterly account of 'The Malaysian Ramayana in Performance', i.e. in the form primarily of shadow-plays. Of the two types, the *Wayang Siam* and the *Wayang Jawa*, the former is the far more popular, and draws its matter from 'Hikayat Maharaja (Ra)Wana', either from its roots, trunk and main branches, or its secondary *ranting* or twigs. 'None of the *Wayang Siam* versions, however', says Sweeney, 'is identical with the *Hikayat Seri Ram* or the Ramakien'.[12] In his paper for the 1981 Seminar, Dr. Ghulam-Sarwar

Yousof concentrates on the 'ranting' or twig stories, i.e. 'the later or minor adventures of Seri Rama and other major Ramayana characters, as well as their offspring... the "ranting", stories begin after the death of Rawana and Seri Rama's successful rescue of Sita Devi'. There is diminishing (Hindu) religious influence and rather more Islamisation and modernisation. On the basis of the 'twigs' collected and critically studied by him, Dr. Yousof has sorted out the recurrent themes and motifs, and he has also given in an appendix three selected 'ranting' stories.

The old Javanese Ramayana—the *Ramayana Kakawin* (RK)—was the subject of Dr. Soewito Santoso's paper at the 1975 Seminar. He then showed how RK, which was already well-known in Central and East Java during the reign of Sri Maharaja Rakai Watukura 1000 years ago, had taken as its main source, not Valmiki, but the *Bhatti-Kavya* or *Ravana Vadha* of the 6th or 7th century A.D. After the coming of Islam and the fall of the Hindu Kingdom in the 16th century, the Rama story was still cherished by the people, Hindus and Muslims alike, although no more regarded as a religious work. There has been some feeble attempt at Islamisation—for example, the introduction of a Rama-Lakshmana dialogue in the Dandaka Forest about the inevitability of death echoing certain verses in the Quran—but the human and moral grandeur of the Rama story still moves the hearts of men and women and guides their everyday conduct. Writing in particular of the story of 'The Glory of Rama's Crown' (*Wahyu Mukutha Rama*, WMR), which is a part of the *Ramayana Kakawin*, Santoso now shows how the concept of 'Rama's Crown' links the Ramayana and Mahabharata cycles, and how 'Astabrata' (or the Teaching of Rama to Vibhishana) comprises knowledge about Earth, Fire, Wind, Water, Space, Moon, Sun and Steadfast Mind—divine knowledge, in short, paving the way to liberation.

The last of the Southeast Asian countries to be covered, although but briefly, are China and Japan. In his paper 'Rama Stories in China and Japan: A Comparison', Prof. Minoru Hara follows up his 'Textual Theme of Rama in Japan' (which was presented at the 1975 Seminar) with a revised—'a more literal and faithful'—translation of the 2 Ramayana tales (1. a brief story of the un-named King in a 12th century Japanese work; and 2. the story of Dasaratha inadvertently killing the son of the blind hermit pair), and compares them with their probable Chinese sources. Prof. Hara notes the similarities between the story of the un-named King in *Hobutsushi* (12th century A.D.) and the traditional Rama story, but comparing the Japanese story with a Chinese Jataka, he notes 12 points of divergence. Concluding that the Japanese story is *not* derived from the Chinese Jataka, Hara suggests the possibility of an oral source, perhaps an Indian visitor to Nara in Japan, one Bharadvaja Bodhisena. As for the 'sabda-vedi' story, it occurs in a Japanese collection of the 10th century, and has its striking resemblances with the story in Valmiki, but concludes with a happy ending, for the killed son of the hapless hermit pair comes back to life. Concluding the story, the Buddha tells his disciple Ananda :

> 'Semu in this story is no one but myself. His parents are the king Suddhodana and the queen Maya. It is because of the parents' thoughtful affection and because of my devotedness that I have attained Buddhahood. Everybody has parents. Let everybody take the best possible care of his parents. This is the noble path.'

V

The Ramayana Seminar of 1981 was a milestone in Ramayana studies, like the earlier Seminar of 1975, and the still earlier first International Ramayana Seminar in Indonesia of 1971. The home of origins, the ultimate reservoir, is the Indian subcontinent with its own several living languages and literatures and rich local traditions. The papers presented at the 1975 Seminar (now published in *The Ramayana Tradition in Asia*) gave full coverage to subcontinental India with its several linguistic regions. There were thus papers, not only on the Ramayana versions in Sanskrit, but also on the Jaina Ramayanas, and the Ramayanas in Kashmiri, Hindi, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Oriya, Bengali, Manipuri, Assamese, as also Nepali, Burmese and Sinhalese. At the 1981 Seminar (and hence in the present volume also), the slant is more towards the Southeast Asian countries, and what the papers cumulatively demonstrate is how the Ramayana has in its journeys beyond India both influenced, and responded to, the local situation, cultural, social and anthropological. The Ramayana theme has with a ready resilience submitted to innovation, suffered or invited changes, assimilated new ideas, attitudes and motifs, and yet somehow retained its quintessential uniqueness, humaneness, vitality, universality and perennial contemporaneity The roots and the trunk and the branches—and even the subsidiary and apparently dispensable ' twigs '—are all nevertheless charged by the power of the spirit that flows from the ultimate Valmikian spring of living waters.

Thus, on a review of the changes major and minor, the transmutations and transfigurations, that the Ramayana of Valmiki seems to have undergone in its travels in Southeast Asia, what still stands out is the shining unseverable link with the pristine soul of the Ramakatha. In the course of one's life, man suffers an infinite gradation and variety of changes in outer appearance, movement of body, quiddity of behaviour, flash or leap of mind, and yet it is the same person, the same personality, the same indwelling sou, that gives meaning to the changes and confers the badge of continuity. Beneath the changes in raiment, the marks of seeming, the vital movements, the eyes are the same, and the soul peeps through the eyes, and the heart beats as before, and the Rama-Sita-Lakshmana-Hanuman quartet survive the alterations, embellishments and distortions in the transmission and the story-telling and we salute the same elemental powers, the same allied personalities, the same quadruple glory of the Adi-Kavi's creative imagination. There were changes in the story as the *Ramayana* travelled beyond India's borders, but no more than the changes it invited or suffered and assimilated when it moved in India West and North and East and South, and filled the spaces of the subcontinent. The *itihasa* became *Purana*, *mahakavya*, *nataka*, shadow-play, folk-song, folk-tale, the theme of Tyagaraja's *kritis*- of sculptures and stone reliefs in temples, of painting and miniature, of film and radio play and TV feature, of festivals like the Ram Lila and of children's favourites like the Amar Chitra Katha ' comics '. The jewels are many—large or small, of varied shapes and artistry, of varied degrees of authentic and counterfeit—but the same gold, or something of the same gold, has gone into their making. The lines of variation and slow transformation of the Ramayana story in its travels in space and time and through divers cultural milieus have on the whole been on predictable lines, for one can trace most of the 'changes' to the need for adjustment to new climes and customs, or to the impact of the Jaina, Buddhist or Islamic ways of life, or to the thrust of local history, the impulse to originality on the part of the native bards, the 'modern' desire to humanise alike God-man, Vanara and Rakshasa, and of course the constant itch for novelty or the desire to go one better than one's predecessors in the extravagance of invention and the piling up of the exceptional.

When at last the exciting and exhausting journey has been accomplished, and when the feasted and fascinated mind ventures to take a synoptic view of this tropical immensity and vitality of the Ramayana story in its innumerable forms and contours and manifestations in the Indian and Southeast Asian expanses, one feels fulfilled and humbled, and one can do no more than recall and register the marvellous aptness and sufficiency of Brahma's assurance to the Adi-Kavi :

And O great Sage, as long as mountains stand
  and rivers flow, so long will
this story of Rama's heroic deeds
  be told and cherished on earth.

Not only is the story told a million times, it is told in a million ways, by a million bards, minstrels, declaimers, performers, and artists of the eye and ear, and always the apocalyptic figures take shape before us, and the 'Divine Comedy' unfolds before us again and again and yet again. And so, gathering all the riches of the last two thousand or more years after Valmiki, and grateful to all the successor-laureates, story-tellers, artists, interpreters, entertainers, we return once more to the Adi-Kavi and offer our obeisance to him :

I salute Sage Valmiki, who pours forth
  song-bird like, the honeyed notes
of 'Rama ! Rama !' from the topmost branch
  of Poesy unparalleled.

And how about the perfect executant of the Divine Mission, the perfect hero, the perfect devotee? Hanuman too is with us, always with us, actor and audience both, the perfect paraclete between the human and the Divine:

> Wherever the gloried Name of Rama
>   happens to be hymned, his palms
> joined and raised above his head, Hanuman
>   may be seen there too, always!

20 *September*, 1982 K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

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[1] Quoted in V. Raghavan, *The Ramayana in Greater India* (1975), p. 165.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

[3] *The Ramayana Tradition in Asia* (RTA), edited by V. Raghavan (1980), p. 648.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 40-1.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 74-5.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 681-2.

[7] RTA, pp. 1.

[8] RTA, pp. 240.

[9] In a footnote, H. C. Bhayani acknowledges that the paper presents relevant points and information from his 2 earlier papers: (1) ' Caturmuha, one of the earliest Apabhramsa epic poets' (*Journal of the Oriental Institute*, Baroda, March 1958); and (2) ' The Narrative of Rama in the Jaina Tradition' (*Ramayana Samiksa*, 1967).

[10] Quoted in Prof. Kamala Ratnam's paper in the present volume from Reginald le May's *The Culture of Southeast Asia*.

[11] RTA, pp. 282ff.

[12] RTA, p. 126.

WELCOME ADDRESS

PROF. UMASHANKAR JOSHI
President, Sahitya Akademi.

I HAVE great pleasure in according, on behalf of the Sahitya Akademi, and on my own behalf, a warm welcome to all the learned scholars, who have come from far-off countries and various parts of India to participate in this International Seminar on 'Variations in Ramayana in Asia : their cultural, social and anthropological significance'. I welcome the Vice-President of India, Shri Hidayatullah Khan, a learned judge and scholar, who has kindly agreed to inaugurate the Seminar.

This Seminar is a sequel to the International Seminar on 'The Ramayana Tradition in Asia' held by the Sahitya Akademi at Delhi in December 1975, in the wake of the first International Ramayana Conference, convened by Indonesia. The proceedings of the first Seminar were edited by the great Ramayana scholar, Dr. V. Raghavan, who did not live to see it through the press. The passing away of a scholar of Dr. Raghavan's stature, an indefatigable researcher with dynamism and comprehensive vision, is an irreparable loss to Ramayana studies. 'The Ramayana Tradition in Asia', as edited by him, has since been published.

A happy outcome of the First Seminar was that the Sahitya Akademi, under the guidance of its learned President, Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, himself a great Ramayana scholar, who is now no more, presented to the Union Academique Internationale a research project of a critical annotated inventory of the Ramayana for its sponsorship. An International Editorial Committee has been duly formed and it is going to meet in Delhi during this week. It is hoped that the deliberations at this Seminar, important in themselves, are also bound to go a long way in helping the Editorial Committee to implement the project in the best possible manner.

We are especially happy that this International Ramayana Seminar is being held in New Delhi during the Silver Jubilee year of the Sahitya Akademi.

Cutting across national boundaries the Ramayana has proved to be a work of perennial interest to all kinds of artists. Indeed, the Ramayana is the people's epic. There is no folk-poet or player or puppeteer or painter worth his salt, who has not tried to lend some freshness to it while recreating it.

Five literary mastepieces of ancient India crossed the borders of this subcontinent and became popular in foreign lands, where they eventually got more or less adopted and adapted. The *Panchatantra* and versions of Gunadhya's *Brihatkatha* are said to have had no small influence on the writing of 'Aesop's Fables' and 'The Arabian Nights' respectively. Both works are secular and have been more influential in countries West of India. They penetrated distant and altogether different cultures by their narrative quality and/or moral significance. The other three works are the Buddhistic *Jataka-kathas* and the two great Epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. These three works were grounded in religion and became popular mainly in the countries of East and South-East Asia. All the five works are rich in motifs which have a universal appeal.

If I may be permitted to make a personal reference, in 1952, on a brief visit to Indonesia, I saw a Mahabharata play, 'Iravati Vivaha', if my memory is not failing me, at Semarang in middle Java, played by Muslim actors. Next morning, I saw sculptures relating to the Buddha at Borobudur along with one about King Shibi's sacrifice, which can be traced to the Mahabharata as well as Kathasaritsagara. On visiting a nearby temple at Mandup, I was struck by the vivid detail of the relief sculpture of a well-known fable, that of the foolish tortoise whose mouth, while he was being air-lifted by two cranes, lost hold of the stick as he could not but reply back to the village gamblers staking him in the game. And in the afternoon, at Prambanan, I saw the exquisite panels of Ramayana bas-reliefs. Within less than twenty-four hours, I was exposed to all the five ancient Indian masterpieces as presented in a distant land.

The Ramayana seems to have an edge over other works. Both the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are long continuous narratives and deal with war. The outcome of the war in the Ramayana has come to be looked upon as symbolising the victory of good over evil. This, combined with the noble way Rama conducts himself and the unswerving attachment of Sita towards him inspite of her having fallen on evil days and-what is much worse-on evil tongues, gives ethical and spiritual overtones to the epic. The idealistic appeal of the Ramayana had not a little to do with its popularity both at home and abroad, even before it was metamorphosed into a religious poem, during the medieval period after Krishna and Rama were accepted as incarnations of God Vishnu.

It can be said, paradoxical though it may seem, that the human treatment given to the Rama-epos hardly ever fails to lend it a sort of supra-human divine aura, and any attempt at deifying the hero hardly ever succeeds in draining it of human interest.

The poem may have begun as a panegyric in the Ikshvaku clan, but later a number of other legends also must have been woven into the texture of the narrative. Valmiki, who is acclaimed as the ‘Adi-Kavi’, the first of poets, is that master genius, who was the first to discern a pattern emerging from the vast number of legends, which were either loosely held together or were just floating. In his hand, the narrative ceased to be merely an account of an unprecedented war, or that of a palace intrigue sending the crown-prince into exile on the eve of his coronation or even that of the kidnapping of a loving wife and her ultimate rescue by the heroic husband. The pattern that Valmiki has held up before coming generations is that of human relationships, especially family relationships, those between father and son, brother and brother, husband and wife, etc.

On the one hand this pattern of human relationships accounts for not a little of the magnetism of the Rama-epos and endears it even to peoples of different religions; on the other, it is responsible for the untold number of variations in the narrative, in India as well as in other countries. The Jain and Buddhistic versions in India, which later travelled abroad also, are a case in point. The Mahabharata story does not seem to be amenable to much variation. All that later poets could do was to go on adding *upakhyanas* or subsidiary narratives to it. The Ramayana, on the other hand, gives immense scope to the creative handling of the main narrative. The relationships between the various characters of the Epic tend to be reformulated with the help of motifs that are handy in various cultures. So Sita (literally, a furrow), apart from the Vedic associations of an agricultural goddess or a mythical fertility goddess, could in some versions be Rama's sister and then wife or even Ravana's daughter.

Another great source of the charm of the epic lies in the poet's dealing with three different levels of human existence simultaneously. If the Ayodhya world is human, that of the Kishkindha forest would appear, on the face of it, as somewhat sub-human, and that of Lanka as anti-human. This fact also contributes amply to newer and newer formulations of relationships between persons belonging to the three categories. The forest allies were, indeed, no less human than the common run of mankind. In fact, Hanuman is capable of super-human feats, as even Rama, the greatest of the humans, is. ' Monkeys ' like Hanuman are embodiments of great virtues like loyalty and devotion. One Ramayana version goes to the length of describing Hanuman as the son of Rama. When the Ramayana came to be written as a sacred text, Ravana is shown confessing before Mandodari that he has deliberately offended Rama, so that, being killed at the hands of the Lord, he may attain salvation.

If the Ramayana moves one to the depths of one's being, it is perhaps due to the raw deal meted out to Sita. The Ramayana is not only Rama-Charita (the story of Rama), it is Sita-Charita (the story of Sita) also. And this fact is no less responsible for numerous variations in the narrative.

When one keeps the three levels of human society in one's view, one would be prone to think of the main thrust of the epic to be that of colonization of the sub-human society and confrontation with, and decimation of the anti-human. For all one can see, the overall endeavour of Rama and others of his ilk seems to be the advancement of the agricultural activity. Poet Rabindranath Tagore, in his ' A Vision of India's History ', says that Kshatriyas like King Janaka and Rama took a lead in popularising agriculture by making it a prestigious vocation. Under Rama's influence 'ahalya' (unploughable) land blossomed into new life. Sita-Charita is very relevant if one keeps the agricultural stage of the then human society in view.

Sita, as mentioned earlier, means ' a furrow ' and is associated with the goddess of agriculture in the Vedas. Her marriage with Rama, a protagonist of agriculture, results in a tragedy. It is said it was woman who experimented with the art of agriculture. But it was the male, with his strong wrist, who could till the land. This gave him superiority. Agriculture also led to the saving of surplus food and eventual accumulation of property (amassed through barter, loot, etc.), inculcating a desire in the male to see that it was passed on to children, presumably his own. This put a premium on the chastity of woman, a paramount virtue in an agricultural society. Inspite of the unparalleled love between Sita and Rama, the shadow of suspicion falls over their life. The poets have tried and tried to skirt this issue in their various versions, but not with any appreciable success. This is the heart-rending cry of the *Kraunchi* (female crane) which hurt Valmiki into epic-song. This cry, at the heart of the Ramayana, is what has made it to so appealing a poem to peoples of various religions and lands.

It is to be remembered that even when the poets or artists incorporate variations, they do not stray much farther away from the main episode (exile, kidnapping, killing of the evil-doer) so that the main narrative becomes irrecognisable.

After the variations in the different versions of the Ramayana are studied in thorough detail, it will be possible for us to evaluate the aesthetic quality of each attempt in the light of a comparative study of all the compositions, be they in language, be they stage-shows, or paintings or sculptures.

May I again heartily welcome scholars of the Ramayana-lore, the Vice-President of our Republic and all of you who have graced this occasion.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

JUSTICE M. HIDAYATULLAH,
Vice-President of India.

It gives me great pleasure to be with you to inaugurate the International Ramayana Seminar sponsored by the Sahitya Akademi. The theme of the Seminar is 'Variations in Ramayana in Asia: Their Cultural, Social and Anthropological Significance'. I am glad to welcome the delegates from many of the South East Asian countries who are participating in this Seminar and reading papers relevant to this subject. I am glad that the theme will receive a comprehensive treatment.

From time immemorial, Ramayana has inspired and influenced the people of South East Asia, especially India, and provided a common cultural bond. It has been described as 'the Bible of Asia', 'Odyssey of Asia' and so on. Ramayana influenced not only the Hindus but also the Jains and Buddhists. There are Persian translations of Ramayana by Faizy and Badayuni and Urdu translations like Ramayana Khustar, Ramayana Manzoom and Ramayana Bahar which show that it held the affection of the Muslims. Its influence on Christians is revealed by 'Masihi Ramayana.' India is the original home of this great epic and from this country it travelled to the countries of South East Asia where different variations of it emerged with innovations and additions introduced by the creative genius of the people there. The papers to be read by the delegates, I expect, will throw light on how the variations came in the main story in different countries. I have glanced through some of them and it has become clear that the sources of trans-Indian differences originate from the popular versions in the regional languages in India as well as the Jain versions. The central theme of the epic, however, has remained the same—the upholding of *dharma* which alone can save mankind from error and extinction.

This poetic work emanated from Valmiki, not because of an urge to create one, but as the expression of the spontaneous overflow of compassion for the afflicted and the distressed when he saw a hunter killing one of the love-birds. In India the impact of the Rama theme is so great on the people that there are several regional versions, secondary Ramayanas. It has also greatly influenced music, painting, dance, drama and sculpture. This is also true of the countries wherever Ramayana went. In his introduction to a translation of Valmiki Ramayana, P.P.S. Sastri has said :

> ' The Ramayana is a mirror of the highest ideals of Hindu culture and civilisation. Herein is described the ideal hero Sri Ramachandra who is, not only the exemplar for all living and dutiful sons, but who is also the ideal husband and king. In Lakshmana, we have an ideal brother, who shares the fortunes of his eldest brother and Guru in city and forest, in joy and distress. In Ravana and Vali we have two types, who seem to prosper in the midst of their very excesses but who reap their well-merited retribution in due course. Sita is the noblest flower of Indian womanhood, devoted to her lord in thought, word and deed, whether in her own palace or under duress in an enemy's camp. There can be no better text-book of morals which can be safely placed in the hands of youths to inspire them to higher and nobler ideals of conduct and character.'

It has also been truly said : ' It (Ramayana) is not only a literary treasure but also a source of ennobling influence on the relationships between men as parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, relations and friends, teachers and pupils and rulers and the ruled. '

A unique feature of this epic is that each character who appears in it represents one aspect of human philosophy. It is like a diamond from which many splendid colours emanate. To mention a few : The main character, Rama, followed the path of duty and righteousness, in his attitude and conduct towards his parents, teachers, brothers and wife—towards his friends, servants and devotees. Rama and Sita, the two central figures, are exemplifiers of right thought, right speech and right action under all circumstances. Sita represents compassion and grace. She suffers most but preserves herself with heroism, love and devotion. She is the ideal wife and is the model for our womanhood. Lakshman's role is that of an ideal brother, so loving and so steadfast that he left the comforts of home and family life to look after and protect his brother and his wife. Bharata is the perfect embodiment of purity and selflessness. His role uplifts the heart and gives us a glimpse of the heights to which human nature can rise when cleansed by love and devotion. Hanuman is depicted as a great warrior and an ideal ambassador. He is a noble and heroic character. Vibhishana, the brother of Ravana, always stood for truth and honour. Ravana represents evil and his killing by Rama symbolises the victory of good over evil.

Feelings and emotions are there in human nature. Some breed hatred and passion corrupting human life. But there are cravings for beauty, moral aspirations, reverence for something greater than everything. We should control the forces which push us into conflicts. We should subject ourselves to discipline. Classics really embody national character in all its aspects. When stress is laid nowadays on the study of sciences, pure and applied, a study of the classics raises the quality of public judgment and conduct, and reconciles the disorders of modern life. The classics are the means by which man learns about himself : his own achievements and failures, his own powers and limitations.

Ramayana, one of our classics, gives to our youth the fundamentals of our culture. It is a literature which makes for fellowship and reconciliation. A study of this great epic helps us to treat human beings with understanding and generosity as it contains a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations. Its lessons are thus of permanent value. It is said : ' As long as the mountains stand and the rivers flow so long shall the Ramayana be cherished among men and save them from sin '.

I have now great pleasure in inaugurating the International Ramayana Seminar.

DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF VALMIKI'S RAMAYANA IN SANSKRIT

A. N. JANI

THE Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki—one of the two great epics of India—has moulded the national character of India right from the time of its creation to the present day. It 'is the only mighty creation in the world Literature which has had a fascinating evolution, changing from time to time and people to people. The Rāmāyaṇa has been changing in form, content and spirit from language to language and country to country, nay at times in the same language reflecting the differences in cultural approaches through fertile imaginations. This is, without any shadow of doubt, true with regard to the innumerable versions of the Rāmāyaṇa in Sanskrit.'

The story of RM has had many versions in India and abroad. An attempt is made here to highlight a few important versions of this epic.

(1) The Ramopakhyana in the Mbh

The scholars are not unanimous on the relation between the VRM and the Rmopā of the Mbh.

Weber points out four possibilities—

- (*a*) Rmopā may be a nucleus for the RM.
- (*b*) It may be based upon such RM which may be a precursor of the VRM.
- (*c*) It may be an independent abridged form of VRM.
- (*d*) Rmopā and RM may be two independent developments from one common source.

Hopkins and Ludwig opine that—

Rmopā is an independent version of a Rāmakathā, which may be based upon some earlier Rāma-story. As there are some differences between the Rmopā and RM, the former cannot be an abridgement of the latter.

Jacobi holds that the Rmopā is an abridgement of some earlier form of VRM. Its redactor must have utilised some RM popular in his own region, hence the differences.

But Dr. Bulcke concludes that the Rmopā is based on VRM, because (1) there are 86 points of verbal similarity, (2) some incidents in the former are unintelligible without the knowledge of the VRM.

The story of Rāma occurs at four different places in the Mbh—

(i) In the Āraṇyaparva (III. 147. 28-38—Cri. edn.)
(ii) In the Droṇaparva (VII. 59.1-31)
(iii) In the Śāntiparva (XII. 22.51-62)
(iv) In the Āraṇyaparva (III. 252-275)

According to the cri. edn. the extent of Rmopā is 704 verses of which 200 verses are devoted to the description of the battle.

The main important points of deviations from the VRM are—

(*a*) No reference to *putreṣṭi* sacrifice or the *pāyasa*.
(*b*) Sītā is nowhere spoken as '*ayonijā*'.
(*c*) The names of the wives of Rāma's brothers are missing.
(*d*) There is a reference to only one boon to Kaikeyī.

(*e*) Mantharā is described as an incarnation of Dundubhi—a gāndharva lady.

(*f*) There is a reference to only one combat between Vāli and Sugrīva.

(*g*) Avindhya—an old demon—Chief of Rāvaṇa is given more importance.

(*h*) The description of Rāvaṇa's court, artificial head of Rāma, battle between Rāvaṇa and Sugrīva and Rāma's making the sea a target of his arrow—are conspicuous by their absence.

(*i*) Kumbhakarṇa is killed by Lakṣmaṇa.

(*j*) The incidents of Laṅkādahana, bringing of Droṇācala by Hanumān and Sītā's fire-ordeal are also conspicuous by their absence.

(*k*) In the RM the name of the mother of Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa, Śūrpaṇakhā and Vibhīṣaṇa is given as Kaikeyī the daughter of Sumāli. While the Rmopā gives the three different names :

(i) Puṣpotkaṭā—the mother of Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa.
(ii) Mālinī—the mother of Vibhīṣaṇa and
(iii) Rākā—The mother of Khara and Śūrpaṇakhā.

(2) Religious literature on Rama

There are good number of works dealing with Rāma-worship and Rāmabhakti.

Among the Śrīvaiṣṇava sect of Rāmānuja the following Pāñcarātra works may be noted—Agastya-saṃhitā, Kalirāghava, Bṛhadrāghava and Rāghavīya-saṃhitā.

Following are the Upaniṣads dealing with Rāmabhakti—Rāmapūrvatāpanīya, Rāmottaratāpanīya and Rāmarahasyopaniṣad. They treat Rāma as *parama puruṣa* and Sītā as *mūlaprakṛti* and give their *mantras* and *yantras*. These works are not important for us as they do not give the story of Rāma.

(3) The Rama story in the Pauranic literature

The story of Rāma occurs in the following Pauranic works—

(*a*) Viṣṇu (4th cent.) (IV. 4, 5)—gives some more details which are not found in the Harivaṃśa.

(*b*) Brahmāṇḍa (4th cent.) (2.21).

(*c*) Vāyu (5th cent.)—(II. 26)—similar to that of Viṣṇu.

(*d*) Bhāgavata (6th or 7th cent. A.D.) (IX. 10-11)—Here Sītā is declared, for the first time, as an incarnation of Lakṣmī.

(*e*) Kūrma (7th cent.) (I. 19, 21 : II.34).

(*f*) Agni (after 8th cent.) (Chs. 5-12) abridgement of VRM.

(*g*) Nārada (10th cent.) (I. 79 ; II. 75) abridgement of VRM.

(*h*) Brahma—direct adoption from HV. (Ch. 213), Chs. 70-175 based on Gautamī-māhātmya.

(*i*) Garuḍa—(10th cent.)—(I. 143) mostly later interpolation.

(*j*) Skanda—(after 8th)—(II. 30) scattered information.

(*k*) Padma—(12th to 15th)—(Patala-116, Uttara-24, 43-44) scattered information.

Among the subordinate *purāṇas* the Viṣṇudharmottara (7th cent.), Nṛsiṃha (400-500 A.D.), (Chs. 47-52), Vahni, Śiva, Devībhāgavata (10th, 11th cent.) (III. 28-30), Bṛhaddharma, Saura (950-1050 A.D.) (ch. 30) and Kālikā-purāṇa give the Rāma legend to suit their sectarian requirement.

The most salient deviations in the main *purāṇas* are as follows :

(*a*) Viṣṇu—It gives a few more details not found in the HV. e.g. there is a reference to Tāṭikāvadha, and to the sons of Rāma and his brothers (IV.4). Sita is described as '*ayonijā*' (IV. 5).

(*b*) Brahmāṇḍa—also refers to the divine origin of Sītā (II. 21).

(*c*) Vāyu—The Rāma-story of the Vāyu is not different from that of Viṣṇu (28.191-200, 89.22).

(*d*) Bhāgavata—Here Sītā is described as an incarnation of Lakṣmī for the first time in pauranic literature. It also refers to Sītā's *svayaṃvara* and her repudiation (IX. 10-11).

(*e*) Kūrma—gives the description of *Rākṣasa-vaṃśa* (I.19). It refers to the consecration of Rāmeśvara liṅga by Rāma after his victory over Rāvaṇa (I.21). It also says that Rāvaṇa kidnapped Māyāsītā (II.34).

(*f*) Agni—gives only a summary of VRM (5-11). However it attributes Rāma's exile to his unkind treatment to Mantharā. It also refers to the Cāturmāsya sacrifice performed by Rāma on the Mālyavān mountain.

(g) Nārada—gives a short account of Rāma's life (from Bāla to Yuddha Kāṇḍa) in the first part (I.79) while in the second part it gives the summary of all the seven *kāṇḍas* of VRM. Here however Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa etc. are described as incarnations of Nārāyaṇa, Saṅkarṣaṇa etc. (II. 75). In the first part there is a reference to Rāma's rescuing of Vibhīṣaṇa who was imprisoned.

(*h*) Brahma—the material given here seems to be culled from different *purāṇas*. The story of Rāma in Ch. 213 is taken *verbatim* from HV (Ch. 41). Ch. 176 gives an account of Rāvaṇa's penance, which is followed by a short Rāmakathā. It refers to an idol of Vāsudeva, stolen by Rāvaṇa from Amarāvatī, and which was handed over by Rāma to the ocean after Rāvaṇa's slaughter and which was later on consecrated in the Puruṣottama-kṣetra (Jagannāthapurī) by Kṛṣṇa in his incarnation. The remaining incidents of Rāma's life are given in the section called Gautamī-māhātmya (Chs. 70-175) (originally an independent work written in 10th cent. or thereafter). The salient features of this version are as follows :—

(i) Kaikeyī receives three boons.

(ii) Daśaratha performs Aśvamedha sacrifice to expiate the sin of Śravaṇavadha and is assured by the speech from the sky of his begetting a son.

(iii) Daśaratha is saved from hell by Rāma by performing *piṇḍa-dāna* ceremony on the bank of river Gautamī (Ch. 123).

(iv) In the Sahasrakuṇḍa-māhātmya (Ch. 154), there is reference to Sīta-tyāga and Rāma's subsequent austerities at this holy place on the bank of Gautamī river.

(v) In the Kiṣkindhā tīrtha-māhātmya (Ch. 157), there is a reference to Rāma's staying on the banks of river Gautamī after Rāvaṇavadha, for five days. It also refers to Rāma's worship of a Śiva-liṅga.

(*i*) Garuḍa—Though the period of its composition is assigned to the 10th Cent., the narration of RM, MBH and HV therein is further later interpolation.

The main deviations in the story are: (*a*) Rāma himself disfigures Śūrpaṇakhā and (*b*) Rāma goes to Gayā for *pitṛ-śrāddha*(Ch. 143).

(*j*) Skanda—Though a composition of a period after 8th cent., it contains many interpolations the period of which is uncertain.

The different sections of this *purāṇa* give scattered information on Rāma's life :

(i) Maheśvara-khaṇḍa (Ch. 8)—gives Rāvaṇacarita which is followed by Rāmacarita ending with Rāvaṇavadha.

(ii) Vaiṣṇava-khaṇḍa (Kārtikeya-māhātmya (Chs. 20-25). Here the reason for Rāma's incarnation is supplied. The story of the curse of Vṛndā, as well as the story of Dharmadatta and Kahalā is given. The former is reborn as Daśaratha.

The Ayodhyā-māhātmya (Ch. 6) gives an account of Rāma's return to heaven.

(iii) Brahma-khaṇḍa—(Setu-māhātmya Ch. 2) gives a short Rāma-kathā which gives an account of *setubandha*. Ch. 7 refers to Rāma's establishing a *liṅga* before *samudrabandhana*. Ch. 22 describes fire-ordeal incident where Agni proclaims chastity of Sītā. Ch. 27 mentions Rāma's establishing a *liṅga* at Koṭitīrtha to expiate *brahmahatyā* due to Rāvaṇavadha. Ch. 30 refers to Vibhīṣaṇa's request to Rāma to demolish *setu*. Chs. 44-47 present one more Rāmacarita (based on Rmopā of Mbh). This is followed by an account of Rāma's establishing Rameśvaralinga. Hanumān is sent to bring a liṅga from Kailāsa but is delayed and laments therefor.

The Dharmāraṇya section (Chs. 30-31) gives in 89 verses, one more Rāmacarita, the special feature of which is this that it gives dates of some important events.

(*iv*) Kāśīkhaṇḍa—Rāmakathā is absent here.

(*v*) Avantīkhaṇḍa—(Caturaśītiliṅga-māhātmya, Ch. 79) gives life of Hanumān, who is described as an incarnation of Rudra. The Revākhaṇḍa (Ch. 136) gives an account of Ahalyā, who after becoming free from curse is described as performing the worship of Śiva on the bank of Narmadā.

(*vi*) Nāgara-khaṇḍa (Chs. 96-98) refers to the friendship of Daśaratha with Indra ; his penance at Kārtikeya-pura for begetting a son, his consolation by Janārdana and his getting four sons and one daughter (Śāntā).

Chs. 99-103 gives description of Rāma's ascent to heaven. Here Rāma is described as going to Vibhīṣaṇa after Sītā's banishment and Lakṣhmaṇa's death, and his preaching to Vibhīṣaṇa. Rāma demolishes the *setu* at the request of Vibhīṣaṇa and on his return establishes *liṅgas* in many holy places.

Ch. 208 refers to resume of Ahalyā and her performing *tīrthayātrā* and *Śivapūjā*.

(*vii*) Prabhāsakhaṇḍa—(Prabhāsakṣetra-māhātmya Chs. 111-113) refers to the establishment of many *liṅgas* in Rāmeśvara by Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa.

Ch. 123 refers to *liṅgasthāpana* by Rāvaṇa in the Rāvaṇeśvaratīrtha.

Ch. 171 refers to *liṅgasthāpana* by Daśaratha in Daśaratheśvara for getting a son.

(*k*) Padmapurāṇa—Its different sections are composed in different periods. The Pātālakhaṇḍa, which gives much more material on Rāma-story is assigned to the 12th cent. while the last *khaṇḍa* which also presents complete Rāmacarita is believed to take its present form in 15th cent.

(1) The Pātālakhaṇḍa (Ch. 1, 58) gives a detailed account of Aśvamedha sacrifice. Its salient features are as follows :

- (i) It gives a Rāmacarita (36.6-80) giving dates of important events. This is reproduced from the Skandapurāṇa.
- (ii) It refers to Sīta-tyāga due to washerman's charge.
- (iii) Birth of Kuśa and Lava and their battle with Rāma's army (Chs. 59-66).
- (iv) Union of Rāma and Sītā—a happy end introduced (Chs. 67-68).
- (v) Rāma freeing Vibhīṣaṇa (Ch. 100).
- (vi) Ch. 112 describes a *purākalpīya* RM. which refers to Daśaratha's four wives (Kauśalyā, Sumitrā, Surūpā and Suveṣā) ; Sītāsvayaṃvara—episode refers to the futile efforts of Indra and Rāvaṇa etc. in lifting the bow. The monkey army crosses the ocean with the help of Śiva's bow. Kumbhakarṇa is killed after Rāvaṇa. In Ch. 113 Rāma praises Śiva for getting *Śiva-bhakti.*

(2) The Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa mentions only the following few points :

- (i) Story of Śambūka-vadha (Chapter 35).
- (ii) Dialogue between Rāma and Agatsya which summarises the contents of five Chapters of VRM (VII. 79-83).
- (iii) Rāma's preaching to Vibhīṣaṇa and his establishing Vāmana in Mathurā.

(3) In the Uttarakhaṇḍa, we find—

- (i) Rāma-rakṣā-stotra (Ch. 74)
- (ii) Śambūka-vadha-kathā (Ch. 230)
- (iii) Complete Rāmacarita (Chs. 269-71). Here in the beginning there is story of Svāyambhū Manu who by the merit of his austerities begets Viṣṇu as his son in three consecutive incarnations. The remaining part gives the summary of the seven *kāṇḍas*

of VRM. The only difference is that herein Rāma and Sītā are described as *Pūrṇāvatāra* of Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī. Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Śatrughna are introduced as *aṃśāvatāra* of Ananta, Sudarśana and Pāñcajanya respectively. Thus the *avatāravāda* is found here in full swing.

(iv) Rāma is spoken of as disfiguring Śūrpaṇakhā.

(4) Brahmavaivarta—gives the story of Sītā-haraṇa which refers to a form of Māyāmāya Sītā created by Agni (Prakṛiti-khaṇḍa, Ch. 121). This is identical with the story as found in the Devībhāgavata (ix. 16).

Subordinate Puranas

(*a*) Viṣṇudharmottara—(Kashmir, 7th Cent.), gives, after the story of Rāvaṇavadha (Ch. 200), a Rāmacarita wherein Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Śatrughna are spoken of as incarnations of Nārāyaṇa, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha respectively (Ch. 212). It also speaks of Rāma as always carrying a golden *liṅga* with him (222.12).

(*b*) Nṛsiṃha Purāṇa (400-500 A.D.) gives a summary of first six *kāṇḍas* of VRM with slight changes :

(i) *Avatāravāda* is stressed and Rāma is described as a *pūrṇāvatāra* of Nārāyaṇa and Lakṣmaṇa of Śeṣa.

(ii) Ahalyā is spoken of as ' pāṣāṇabhūtā '.

(iii) Rāma is attacked by other kings after the *svayaṃvara* is over.

(iv) Rāvaṇa does not touch Sītā at the time of kidnapping.

(v) Rāma performs sacrifices after Rāvaṇa-vadha and ascends to heaven.

(vi) There is no Sītātyāga.

(vii) An account of Rāvaṇa's genealogy is given in the beginning (Ch. 47).

(*c*) Vahnipurāṇa—Ams. of Sam. (1646 in the I. O. Lib.) gives a detailed account of Rāma, which presents a summary of VRM. Following are its salient features :

(i) Bhṛgu's curse is the cause of Rāmāvatāra.

(ii) Madhu and Kaiṭabha, Hiraṇyakaśipu and Hiraṇyākṣa are born as Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa.

(iii) Pāṣāṇabhūtā Ahalyā is referred to.

(iv) Hanumān enters Laṅkā taking the form of a small mouse.

Sectarian influence on the Ramakatha

Except Skandapurāṇa, which is Śaiva, we find very little sectarian influence in the *purāṇas* mentioned above. But the sectarian influence is found rampant in other Śaiva and Śākta *purāṇas*, which depict Rāma either as a devotee of Śiva or Devī and attribute Rāma's victory over Rāvaṇa to the grace of either of the two deities.

Let us take up Śivapurāṇa. Devībhāgavata and other sectarian *durāṇas* :

(*a*) *Śivamahāpurāṇa* :

(i) Rudrasaṃhitā: Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa gives the story of Nāradamoha (Chs. 3-4).

(ii) Satīkhaṇḍa—Satī's test of Rāma. Rāma tells her that he has incarnated at the behest of Śiva (Chs. 24-26).

(iii) Yuddhakhaṇḍa-gives the story of Vṛndā's curse (Ch. 23).

Śatarudrasaṃhitā describes Hanumān as born from the Semen of Śiva (ch. 20).

Dharmasaṃhitā gives a short Rāmakathā (Chs. 13-14).

Jñānasaṃhitā refers to Sītā's offering of *piṇḍas* to Daśaratha (Ch. 30).

Rama is helped by Śiva in crossing the ocean (Ch. 50).

(*b*) Devībhāgavata gives a Rāmakathā in connection with *navarātra-māhātmya*.

(i) Here also Rāma disfigures Śūrpaṇakhā.

(ii) Rāma as per advice of Nārada observes *navarātra* fasts, as a result of which the Devī assures him of his victory over Rāvaṇa. Rāma worships Vijayā and marches towards ocean with the monkey army (III. 28-30).

Vedavatī-narrative is also found in this purāṇa (ix. 16).

(*c*) Mahābhāgavata (Devī) Purāṇa (Guj. printing press, Bombay, 1913) composed in either East Bengal or West Kāmarūpa in 10th or 11th Cent., also gives a Rāmopākhyāna (Chs. 37-49) which does vary much from the VRM. Following are its peculiar features :

(i) Rāma, who is requested to incarnate by gods declares that he cannot kill Ravaṇa as long as the Goddess resides in Laṅkā. The gods, therefore, go to Devī at Kailāsa. Devī promises them to give up Laṅkā after Sītāharaṇa and assures Rāma of Her help. At the time of battle, Rāma praises her many times. Brahmā also prepares a clay-idol of Devī and worships her for Rāma's victory.

(ii) According to this story Sītā is described as born from the womb of Mandodarī (Chs. 42-64).

(*d*) Bṛhaddharmapurāna gives a Rāmakathā which is very much similar to one given in the Mahābhāgavata (Devī) Purāṇa. It adds following new features :

(i) The account of *Sītāharaṇa* is similar to one found in the Nṛsiṃhapurāṇa.

(ii) Hanumān enters Laṅkā taking the form of a cat (I. 18-22).

(iii) After Rāmakathā an account of Rāmāyaṇotpatti is given, wherein the RM is extolled as a source of the Mbh and other purāṇas (I. 25-30).

(*e*) Saura-purāṇa describes Rāma as a devotee of Śiva. His success is attributed to the grace of Śiva. Sītā is spoken of as an incarnation of Pārvatī, who was propitiated by Janaka.

(*f*) Kālikāpurāṇa describes Brahmā as propitiating Durgā for Rāma's victory (62. 20-38). Sītā and two other sons are found by Janaka while tilling the land.

Independent versions of the VRM

Over and above the *purāṇas* there are some other works which gives us independent versions of the VRM. They will be treated in detail hereunder in their chronological order.

(1) *The Yogavāsiṣṭha or the Vāsiṣtha RM :*

This work which also called Yogavāsiṣṭha-mahā rāmāyaṇa, 'is devoted, not to describing the Rāma-sāga, but to an explanation of the means for acquiring final emancipation. It is said to contain 32,000 *ślokas*, and purports to be the instruction conveyed to Rāma by Vasiṣṭha before he was taken away by Viśvāmitra on the tour which ended in his marriage. It is divided into six *prakaraṇas*, entitled, respectively, the *vairāgya-*, *mumukṣu-*, *utpatti-*, *sthiti-*, *upāsanā-*, and *nirvāṇa-prakaraṇas-*. Their contents can be gauged from their titles '.

Winternitz and S. N. Das Gupta assign it to the 8th Cent. But Dr. Raghavan fixes its composition between 1100 and 1250 A.D.

In the beginning three reasons are given for Rāmāvatara viz. the curses of Sanatkumāra, Bhṛgu and Devaśarmā (*vairāgya*, Ch. 1).

Thereafter it speaks of Rāma's dejection at the age of 16. At the request of Viśvāmitra, Vasiṣṭha gives him an elaborate advice as a result of which Rāma becomes totally detached and performs his duty.

The last chapter gives the story of the birth of Kākabhuśuṇḍi and his stay on the Sumeru mountain. No special relation between Rāma and Kākabhuśuṇḍi is suggested (*nirvāṇa*, 13-23).

(2) *Adhyātma RM* :

It is one of the 85 apocrypha of the Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa, the majority of which are modern works. Ekanātha, the saint from Mahārāṣṭra (16th Cent.) calls it in his Bhāvārtha-RM, a modern treatise composed of excerpts from older writings and having no pretence to be considered as emanating from the old *ṛṣis*.

It is a canonical book of the Vaiṣṇavas. 'It is very highly respected by all classes of Hindus for the beauty of its language, its flow of verse, its clear statement of the doctrines of the Vedānta, and like the Bhagavadgītā, for its combination of the path of devotion with that of knowledge... The language of the book though not the simple language of Vālmīki, often rises to eloquence especially in its devotional portions and the sonorous flow of its verse lends it quite a unique charm. Nothing is known of its author or as to who he was or where he flourished. The internal evidence furnished by it however points out to a modern origin, after the system of worship inculcated by the Tantras had come into vogue. So far as one could see from its language and trend of thought it appears to be posterior even to the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, the other canonical work of the Vaiṣṇavite sect, written about the 14th century.'

Though popularly known as Adhyātma RM it is also called by names such as Adhyatma-rāma, Rāmacarita, Adhyātma-rāma-saṃhitā and Adhirāmasaṃhitā, which justify the above statement of Ekanātha that it is composed of excerpts from older writings.

The Pratisargaparva of the Bhaviṣyapurāṇa tells us of one Rāmaśarmā, a devotee of Śiva living in Kāśī, who was initiated in Rāmabhkati by Śiva and who later on resorted to Kṛṣṇa-caitanya and who composed at his instance the auspicious Adhyātma RM.

Divested of its figmentary element, this story means that Rāmānanda of Kāśī, immediately after his conversion from Śaivism to Vaiṣṇavism and before instituting his own sect of Rāmānandīya Vaiṣṇavas, composed the Adhyātmarāmāyaṇa.

This however suggests the compilation of this RM by some unknown learned scholar in the circle of Rāmānanda sect (13th cent.), who tried to present in it a synthesis of practical philosophy and religion and a nice specimen of a literary work, which resulted further in developing two parallel currents of Bhakti—the *saguṇa* and the *nirguṇa*.

Like the VRM it also consists of 7 *kāṇḍas*. It has 4399 verses divided into 65 *sargas*. It follows the VRM closely and employs mainly the same *anuṣṭubh* metre interspersed occasionally with other metres as in the VRM. Its language is also simple. Its special features are as under:

(*a*) It is in the form of a dialogue between Umā and Maheśvara, which was heard by Nārada from Brahma.

(*b*) The *avatāravāda* is rampant. Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa are throughout spoken as incarnations of Parabrahma, Prakṛti and Śeṣa respectively. Viśvāmitra, Vasiṣṭha, Janaka, Kausalyā, Kumbhakarṇa, Rāvaṇa etc., are depicted as knowing the purpose of Rāma's incarnation.

(*c*) The influence of the Bhāgavata is very great. In fact the Bālakāṇḍa is simply an imitation of the Bhāgavata. All the *līlās* of Bāla Kṛṣṇa in the Bhāgavata (10th skandha) are reiterated in case of Bāla Rāma. Thus Bāla Rāma shows his divine form to his mother Kauśalyā (Ch.3). Thus the compiler has filled up the lacuna of the *līlās* of Rāma with the help of his study of the Bhāgavata.

(*d*) The incident of Kevaṭa is given after Ahalyā's rescue. Tulasīdāsa puts this in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa.

(*e*) Vālmīki gives his autobiography to suggest the efficacy of repeating the name of Rāma (II. 6).

(*f*) The story of Māyāmayī Sītā being kidnapped (III. 7).

(*g*) Lakṣmaṇa observing fast for 12 years (III. 4; VI. 8).

(*h*) Rāma's establishing a *Śivaliṅga* before *setubandha* (vi. 4).

(*i*) The account of Rāvaṇa's sacrifice as per advice of Śukra and its destruction by Aṅgada (VI. 10).

(*j*) Reference to nectar in the navel of Rāvaṇa (VI. 11. 53).

(*k*) Rāvaṇa's kidnapping of Sītā with a view to attaining the Vaikuṇṭha (VII. 4.9).

(*l*) It delineates *sevya-sevaka* relation between Rāma and his younger brothers unlike the VRM which speaks of fraternal love between them.

The Adhyātma RM is important also as a repository of all the floating anecdotes connected with the characters of the VRM. All the anecdotes are compiled together to establish their divine origin. The VRM describes Rāma as the best of men and tries to show how, in spite of the few failings of humanity, one can rise to godhead by setting before him the noble ideal of truth and duty as Rāma did. The Adhyātma RM, on the other hand, tries to explain away all failings of humanity, whenever they come in the narrative, by resorting to the *anādi avidyā* of the Vedānta.

The Adhyātma RM, which draws its narrative part from the VRM and its philosophical part from the Vedānta and the Bhāgavata commands very great respect among the people.

It ' marks an important stage in the history of religion in India, for the theology of the different Vaiṣṇava sects is largely based on it, and Tulsīdāsa owed much to its inspiration '.

(3) *The Adbhuta RM* :

' The Adbhuta-Rāmāyaṇa is different from either of the preceding. It is also called the Adbhutottara-kāṇḍa, and professes to be an additional, or eighth kāṇḍa, or a supplement to the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa. Vālmīki is said to have composed two Rāmāyṇas, one in a thousand million *ślokas* for the use of the gods, and one in twenty-four thousand *ślokas* for the use of mankind. The latter is the well-known Rāmāyaṇa generally current at the present day. The Adbhuta-RM professes to consist of extracts from the former, and to give accounts of episodes that find no place in the latter. Thus, although the frame-skeleton is the same in both works, the actual contents of each are very different. For instance, in the Adbhuta, while long and minute accounts are given of the respective origins of the incarnations of Rāma and Sītā ; the building of the causeway, the taking of Laṅkā, and the destruction of Rāvaṇa, are all dismissed in a single *śloka* (xvi. 17). '

' As a religious document, while, of course, Vaiṣṇava, it is also Śākta, and the later *sargas* are a frank imitation of the Devī Māhātmya, in which Sītā performs the actions of Devī in that work. She,—the tender, gracious Sītā of Vālmīki,—is in this section of the poem even given Devī's attributes. She is pictured as famished, hollow-eyed, loud-shouting, wearing a garland of skulls, four-armed, with lolling tongue, matted hair, and so on, with all Devī's accompaniments of grisly horror, including even her *matṛkas*. The poem is thus a mixture of Bhākta-teaching with Śaivism, in which the salient features of both schools are combined. The attitude towards Rāma and Sītā is carefully worked out in a long conversation between the former and Hanūmat (Sargas xi-xv), in which, after discourses on Sāṅkhya-yoga and bhakti-yoga, Rāma declares that he himself is the Supreme Brahman, the Sanātana-sarvātman (xvi. 1), in whose Śakti everything that is exists (xiv. 9). Elsewhere, Sītā repeatedly appears as this Śakti. '

It consists of 27 sargas having 1353 verses and is in the form of a dialogue between Vālmīki and Bharadvāja. It is believed to be posterior to the Adhyātma RM.

Its subject-matter can be divided into three parts :

I. Reasons for the incarnation (Chs. 2-8) :

The curse of Nārada and Parvata to Viṣṇu is responsible for his incarnation as Rāma. Śrīmatī, the daughter of Ambarīṣa is also cursed to be born as Jānakī destined to be kidnapped by a demon.

Thereafter another new story for Sītā's incarnation is given. According to this, Nārada being humiliated by Lakṣmī in the heaven curses her to be born as a daughter of Mandodarī (Chs. 5-8).

II. Rāma-story as per VRM (Chs. 9-16) :

Here the entire Rāma-story is given in brief beginning with Paraśurāma's defeat and ending with Rāma's return to Ayodhyā. In this version Rāma shows his Viṣṇu form to Paraśurāma and, after Sītāharaṇa, to Hanumān. Chapters 11-15 present a dialogue between Rāma and Hanumān dealing with Bhakti at length.

III. Slaying of thousand-faced Rāvaṇa (Chs. 17-27) :

This part is an imitation of the Devīmāhātmya. Here Sītā is described as killing thousand-faced Rāvaṇa, living in Puṣkaradvīpa.

In fact the very purpose of this RM seems to establish superiority of Sītā over Rāma. Its beginning itself is indicative of the same. After Rāma's return to Ayodhyā the sages come to the great Rāma. They extol him for killing Rāvaṇa. At this Sītā begins to laugh. On being asked the reason thereof she declares that there is another Rāvaṇa having 1000 faces—the brother of Rāvaṇa—and unless he is killed the world will not be freed from fear. Rāma then invades this Rāvaṇa. In the fierce battle when Rāma faints it is Sītā who takes weapons in her hand and kills this thousand-faced Rāvaṇa.

In Ch. 25 Rāma extols Sītā by reciting her thousand names (Sītā-sahasranāma).

All this shows Sītā's superiority over Rāma at least by 100 times. It is therefore rightly said that the work aught to have been rightly called as Sītā-māhātmya. But its wonderful character justifies its present title as well.

At places the author introduces verses from the VRM with slight changes e.g. the phalaśruti :

पठन् द्विजो वा ऋषभत्वमीयात्
स्यात् क्षत्रियो भूमिपतित्वमीयात् ।
वणिग्जनः पण्यबलत्वमीयात्
जनश्च शूद्रोऽपि महित्त्वमीयात् । VRM I 1.100.

It is reiterated in the present RM as follows :

पठन् द्विजो वाऋशभत्वमीयात्
क्षात्रान्वयो भूमिपतित्वमीयात् ।
वणिग्जनः पुण्यफलत्वमीयात्
शृण्वन् हि शूद्रोऽपि महत्वमीयात् ॥ I 124.

The Adbhuta RM is also a store-house of folk-legends relating to Rāma and Sītā like the Adhyātma RM.

'It is also an attempt to introduce the terrible cult of Śaiva Śāktism into the altogether alien soil of Vaiṣṇavism.'

(4) *Ānanda RM* :

This seems to be composed after the composition of the Adhyātma RM and before Ekanātha (16th cent.) i.e. somewhere in the 15th cent. as is clear from many quotations from the Adhyātma RM. It also contain some strange stories.

It is ascribed to Vālmīki. It has 9 *kāṇḍas*, 109 *sargas* and 12252 stanzas, and is narrated in the form of a dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī. It also contains a sub-dialogue between Rāmadāsa and Viṣṇudāsa'.

Its kāṇḍawise main contents are as under :

I. Sārakāṇḍa (13 *sargas*) :

(*a*) Rāvaṇa kidnaps Kauśalyā at the time of her marriage.

(*b*) Rāma's *bāla-līlā*, the story of Kevata (both are taken from the Adhyātma RM).

(c) Rāvaṇa's presence in Sītā's *svayaṃvara.*

(d) Sītā's birth from fire.

(e) Curse to Vṛndā ; Kalahā and Dharmadatta are reborn.

(f) Umā's impersonation of Sītā to test Rāma after Sītāharaṇa.

(g) Rāma's acquiring of Ātmalinga and Pārvatī from Śiva and losing them.

(h) Kidnapping of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to Pātāla by Airāvaṇa and Mairāvaṇa and their rescue by Hanumān.

(i) The story of Sulocanā.

(j) Rāvaṇa's kidnapping of Sītā with a view to getting *mokṣa.*

II. *Yātrākāṇḍa* (9 *sargas*) :

It gives the story of the origin of the VRM and refers to the composition of Śatakoṭi RM by Vālmīki (Chs. 1-2).

Majority of the material hereafter is a new invention. There is a description of Rāma's pilgrimage in four quarters of India.

III. *Yāgakāṇḍa* (9 *sargas*) :

Rāma's Aśvamedha sacrifice is described in this.

IV. *Vilāsakāṇḍa* (9 *sargas*) :

(a) It begins with Raghuvīrastava by Śaṅkara (Ch. 1) which is followed by a top-to-toe description of Sītā. Her toilet, water-sport and the dinacaryā of both Rāma and Sītā are given (Chs. 2.6).

(b) Rāma is assured of having thousands of wives in the forth-coming incarnation as a reward of his observing the vow of having only one wife (Chs. 7-19).

(c) Rāma blesses Guṇavatī and Piṅgalā to be reborn as Satyabhāmā and Kubjā respectively during his Kṛṣṇa incarnation. (Ch. 8.)

Rāma's pilgrimage to Kurukṣetra with Sītā (Ch. 9).

V. *Janmakāṇḍa*—(9 *sargas*) :

(a) Rāma abandons Sītā (Chs. 1-3).

(b) Birth of Kuśa and Lava created by Vālmīki (Ch. .4)

(c) Battle of Kuśa and Lava with Rāma's army ; appearance of Mother Earth at the request of Sītā but being afraid of Rāma she returns Sītā to him.
Story of the birth of two sons each to Ūrmilā, Māṇḍavī and Śrutakīrti (Chs. 6-9).

VI. *Vivāhakāṇḍa—(9 sargas)*

Descriptions of the marriages of eight sons of the four brothers Rāma, etc.

VII. *Rājyakāṇḍa—(24 sargas)*

This gives a detailed account of many invasions of Rāma and the principles of polity. The peculiar feature of this *kāṇḍa* is the influence of Kṛṣṇa's life on that of Rāma. The ladies are enamoured of his beauty. Consequently Rāma promises them to fulfil their desire in the next incarnation. (cf. Śatanārīvara-pradāna—Ch. 4 ; Dvijakanyācatuṣṭaya-varadāna—Ch. 11 ; Ṣoḍaśa-sahasra-varadāna—Ch. 12).

Rāma blesses a maidservant to be born as Rādhā in the next birth as a reward of her having tasted the *tāmbūla-rasa* of Rāma. (Ch. 21). Thus an attempt to establish the superiority of Rāmāvatāra is made (Ch. 20).

In the story of defeat of Rāma at the hands of Śataskandha Rāvaṇa and the slaughter of the latter by Sītā, as well as Sītā's taking the form of a Caṇḍī to kill Mūlakāsura, the influence of Śakti-cult and of the Adbhuta RM is felt.

VIII. *Manoharakāṇḍa (18 cantos) :*

This is not directly connected with the story of Rāma. It contains mere ritual than narrative and gives the method of Rāmopāsanā, the importance of uttering Rāma's name, citramahimā and Rāmakavaca, etc.

IX. *Pūrṇakāṇḍa—(9 cantos)*

In this final *kāṇḍa* the invasion of kings of lunar race and their battle are described. It ends with Kuśa's coronation and Rāma's ascent to Vaikuṇṭha.

Minor Ramayanas

The Ānanda RM (vii. 8. 62) says there are many RMS based on the original RM cf.

रामायणादेव सान्ति नानारामायणानि हि ॥ (VIII 8.62).

All these are comparatively later compositions of 17th or subsequent centuries. Some of them are as follows :—

(1) *Bhusuṇḍi RM* :

This RM which is most frequently referred to is known also by other titles such as Mūla RM, Ādi RM, etc.

The original dialogue between Bharata and Atri is narrated by Bhuśuṇḍi to Śāṇḍilya. The description of holy places round Citrakūṭa and a reference to Rāma's perpetual *rāsa-krīḍa* with Śītā and her friends in a beautiful *maṇḍapa* in a lake in the Santānaka forest in Citrakūṭa suggests its place of origin.

(2) *Mahā RM* :

It proclaims complete divinity of Rāma. It gives a description of 48 lines in the foot-sole of Rāma who is called here Nirakṣarātīta Brahma. His devotion through *sakhibhāva* is preached. Śītā's 33 *śaktis* are enumerated by name and their function is explained. It also refers to Rāma's *rāsakrīḍā*.

(3) *Mantra RM* :

It is conspicuous by the absence of Rāmakathā. It merely gives different Rāmamantras declared by the different characters of the RM.

(4) *Vedānta RM* :

This gives the story of Paraśurāma's birth and his life. It is told by Vālmīki to Rāma on his question to the former regarding the annihilation of *Kṣatriyas* by Paraśurāma and reason for their not being completely extinct.

Over and above this there are many RMS enlisted in the catalogues of MSS. A list of 19 such RMS is given at the end as App. I.

Kalanirnaya RM

There is a class of RMS which give dates to the differnt events in Rāma's life.

The oldest traces of such tendency are found in the Skanda (Brahmakhaṇḍa, Dharmāraṇyakhaṇḍa Ch. 30) and the Padma purāṇa (Pātālakhaṇḍa Ch. 36).

One such RM is ascribed to Agniveśa. Its different editions are called—Agniveśa RM, Samayādarśa RM and Samayanirūpaṇa RM.

There is one *Śatasloki* RM attributed to Agniveśa. The present writer has undertaken to edit it with Gujarati translation.

One Abda RM attributed to Giridhara is referred to and the dates therefrom are reproduced in the special RM issue of Kalyāṇa.

APPENDIX I

Following is the list of RMS published in the book 'Hindutva' by Shri Rāmadāsa Gauḍa, prepared from the notes supplied to him by Pt. Dhanarāja Shastri of Basti :

Name of the RM	Author	dialogue between	No. of verses	Main features
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1. Mahā RM		Siva & Pārvatō	3,50,000	Describes 99 *Rāsalīlās* of Rāma
2. Saṃvṛta RM	Nārada	..	24,000	..
3. Lomaśa RM	Lomaśa	..	32,000	Daśaratha and Kauśalyā are spoken of as king Kumuda and queen Vīramati reborn.

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Agastya RM	Agastya	..	16,000	Gives the story of of Bhānupratāpa Arimardana. Here King Kuntala and Sindhumatī are described reborn as Dasaratha and Kauśalyā.
5. Mañjula RM	Sutīkṣṇa	..	..	This also gives the story of Bhānupratāpa. Rāma expounds *navadhā bhakti* to Śabarī.
6. Saupadya RM	Atri	..	62,000	Gives the Puspavātikā episode describing meeting of Rāma with Śītā.
7. Mahāmalā RM	..	Śiva & Parvati	56,000	Bhuśuṇḍi removes the infatuation of Garuḍa.
8. Sauhārda RM	Śarabhaṅga	..	40,000	Refers to the cleverness of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in comprehending and conversing in the language of the monkeys.
9. Maṇiratna RM	..	Vasiṣṭha & Arundhati	36,000	Gives description of Vasantotsava celebrated by Rāma in Mithilā and Ayodhyā.
10. Saurya RM	..	Hanumān & Surya	62,000	It gives Śuka's life; Śuka is reborn as a Washerman who was responsible for the abandonment of Śītā.

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
11. Cāndra RM	..	Hanumān & Candra	75,000	It gives the story of previous birth of Kaivata.
12. Mainda RM	..	Mainda & Kaurava	52,000	Special feature — Vāṭikā episode.
13. Svāyambhuva RM	..	Brahmā & Nārada	18,000	Sītā is described as a daughter of Mandodarī.
14. Subrahma RM	..	..	32,000	..
15. Suvarcasa RM	..	Sugrīva & Tārā	15,000	Special features—story of Sulocanā; dialogue by Washerman and his wife ; Śāntā's backbiting o Śītā due to picture of Rāvana ; Śītā's curse to Śāntā to be born as a bird ; slaughter of Mahārāvaṇa..
16. Deva RM	..	Indra & Jayanta	1,00,000	..
17. Śravaṇa RM	..	Indra & Janaka	1,25,000	Gives story of Mantharā's birth ; and describes Janaka's arrival in Citrakūṭa during Bharata's visit there.
18. Duranta RM	..	Vasiṣṭha & Janaka	61,000	Bharata's greatness is extolled.
19. Campū RM	..	Śiva & Nārada	15,000	Reference to a Svyamvara by King Sīlanidhi*

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* Reproduced from Rāmakathā by Dr. K. Bulcke, pp. 175-178.

APPENDIX 2

Versions of VRM in the religious literature and in the works of classical poets.

(A) Religious Literature

- (1) Jaiminīya Aśvamedha
- (2) Mailrāvaṇa Carita or Hanumad-vijaya.
- (3) Sahasramukha-rāvaṇacaritam.
- (4) Satyopākhyāna
- (5) Hanumat-saṃhitā
- (6) Bṛhatkośalakhaṇḍa*

(B) Classical Sanskrit Literature :

(i) Poems :

- (1) Kālidāsa (C. 400 A.D.) : Raghuvaṃśa
- (2) Pravarasena (550-600 A.D.) : Rāvanavaho or Setubandha
- (3) Bhaṭṭi : (500-650 A.D.) : Rāvaṇavadha.
- (4) Kumāradāsa : (C. 800 A.D.) : Jānakīharaṇa
- (5) Abhinanda (9th cent.) Rāmacarita.
- (6) Kṣemendra (11th cent.) :
  - (*a*) Rāmāyaṇamañjari
  - (*b*) Daśāvatāra-carita.
- (7) Sākalyamalla (12th cent.) : Udārarāghava.
- (8) Cakra Kavi (17th cent.) : Jānakīpariṇaya
- (9) Advaita Kavi (17th cent.) Rāmalingāmṛta
- (10) Mohana Svami : (1608 A.D.) Rāmarahasya or Rāma Carita (India Office MS. of 1970 AD.)

(ii) Dramas :

- (1) Bhāsa, (2nd cent. A.D.)
  - (*a*) Pratimā
  - (*b*) Abhiṣeka
- (2) Bhavabhūti (8th cent.)
  - (*a*) Mahāvīracarita
  - (*b*) Uttararāmacarita

(3) Diṇṇāga (9th cent.)
Kundamālā

(4) Murāri (900 A.D.)
Anargharāghava

(5) Rājaśekhara : (10th cent.)
Bālarāmāyaṇa

(6) Hanumān :
Hanumannāṭaka or Mahānāṭaka

(7) Śaktibhadra (9th cent.)
Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi

(8) Yaśovarman : Rāmābhyudaya (8th cent.)

(9) Māyurāja : Udāttarāghava.

(10) Anonymous : (a) Chalita RM
(b) Kṛtyā RM
(c) Māyāpuṣpaka
(d) Svapnadarśana

(11) Kṣīrasvāmi : Abhinavarāghava

(12) Rāmachandra (12th cent.) (a) Raghuvilāsa
(b) Rāghavābhyudaya

(13) Jayadeva : (12th cent.) Prasanna-Rāghava

(14) Hastimalla : (1290 A.D.) Maithilīkalyāṇa

(15) Subhaṭa : (13th cent.) Dūtāṅgada

(16) Bhāskara Bhatta : (14th cent.) Unmattarāghava

(17) Tryāsamiśradeva : (15th cent.) Rāmābhyudaya

(18) Mahādeva : (17th cent.) Adbhutarāmāyaṇa

(19) Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita : Jānakīpariṇaya

Miscellaneous Poems

- (i) Śleṣakāvyas
  - (1) Dhanañjaya : (12th cent.) Rāghavapāṇḍavīya
  - (2) Mādhava Bhaṭṭa : (12th cent.) ,,
  - (3) Haradatta Sūri : Rāghava-Naiṣadhīya
  - (4) Cidambara : (1600 A.D.) Rāghavapāṇḍavīya-Yādavīya
  - (5) Gaṇgādhara Mahādevakavi : (18th cent.) Saṅkaṭanāsanastotra
- (ii) Vilomakāvyas :
  - (1) Sūryadevi : (1540 A.D.) Rāmakṛṣhṇa-viloma-Kāvya
  - (2) Veṅkaṭādhvari : Yādavarāghavīya
- (iii) Citrakāvyas :
  - (1) Kṛṣṇa Mohana : Rāmalīlāmṛta
  - (2) Venkateśa : Citrabandha RM
- (iv) Amorous Khaṇḍakāvyas :
  - (1) Venkatadeśika : Haṃsasandeśa or Haṃsadūta
  - (2) Rudra Vācaspati : Bhramaradūta
  - (3) Vāsudeva : Bhramara-sandeśa
  - (4) Anonymous : Kapidūta
  - (5) Venkatācārya : Kokilasandeśa
  - (6) Jayadeva Rāmagīta-Govinda
  - (7) Kṛṣṇacandra : Candradūta
  - (8) Hariśaṅkara : Gītarāghava
  - (9) Prabhākara : ,,
  - (10) Haryācārya : Jānakīgita
  - (11) Harināṭha : Rāmavilāsa

(12) Viśvanātha-siṃha Saṅgīta Raghunandana

(13) Viśvanātha : Rāghavavilāsa

(14) Someśvara : Rāmaśataka

Prose Romance and Campus

(1) Kṣemendra : Bṛhatkathāmañjarī

(2) Somadeva : Kathāsaritsāgara

(3) Bhoja : Campū RM (Many other *campūs* such as Uttarakāṇḍa-campū, Uttararāmāyaṇa Campū, etc based on Uttarakāṇḍa of RM)

(4) Vāsudeva : Rāmakathā

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Abbreviations

(1) ABA =Abhandlungen der Königliche Akademie der Wissenschaft 24 Berlin
(2) BSAS =Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.
(3) Cri. Edn. =Critical edition
(4) HV =Harivaṃśa
(5) I.O. =India Office
(6) JAOS =Journal of the American Oriental Society.
(7) JGJRI =Journal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute
(8) Mbh. =Mahābhārata
(9) O.I. =Oriental Institute
(10) O.R. =Oriental Research
(11) RM =Rāmāyaṇa.
(12) Rmopā =Rāmopākhyāna
(13) VRM =Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa

RĀMĀYAṆA IN JAINA TRADITION

UMAKANT P. SHAH

THE Jainas believe in 63 Great Men (Śalākāpuruṣas) who lived in ancient times. Originally they believed in 54 Sālākāpuruṣas, namely, 24 Tirthaṇkaras, 12 Cakravartins, 9 Vāsudevas, and 9 Baladevas. Later on 9 Prati-Vāsudevas or enemies of Vāsudevas who were also great in their own way, were added to the list.[1] Instead of one Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa) and one Balarāma, they believe in nine pairs of Vāsudeva and Baladeva, who lived in different periods of time. Thus Rāma (called Padma by Jaina writers) and Lakṣmaṇa are the eighth Baladeva and Vāsudeva respectively in Jaina traditions. The Vāsudevas are Ardha-cakravartins and Baladevas are their step-brothers.

This very extension of the conception of Vāsudeva and Baladeva to nine such pairs itself lends suspicion that Jaina mythology has borrowed from Hindu tradition and enlarged it. Another factor that supports the inference is that the references to the Śalākāpuruṣas in Jaina literature cannot be placed earlier than the first or second century A.D. whereas the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata in their original form date from two to four centuries before the Christian era. Even if one were to argue that the Jaina accounts of the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata heroes are derived from earlier sources from which the Hindus, the Jainas and the Buddhists adopted them, it is fairly certain that all the Jaina sources as available today are later than the Hindu sources. In our analysis of the earlier and main Jaina versions of the Rāma story we will see that the Jaina sources betray a thorough acquaintance with the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki.

With this preliminary remark we proceed to examine briefly the main early Jaina versions of the Rāma-Kathā.

The following are some of the well-known early Jaina works dealing with the Rāma-Kathā :

1. *Paumacariyam, of Vimala sūri,* in Prakrit, dated in 530 years after Mahāvīra, according to colophon, but assigned to c. third century A.D. by Jacobi ; to c. fourth century A.D. by Kulkarni ; to 530 V.S. by K. R. Chandra.

2. *Vāsudevahiṇḍi,* prathama Khaṇḍa, of *Saṃghadāsa gaṇi,* datable in the fifth century, A.D., in Prakrit, contains on pp. 240-245 a short account with the heading *Rāmāyaṇam Śvetāmbara tradition.*

3. *Padma-caritam* also known as *Padma-Purāṇa, by Raviṣeṇa,* in Sanskrit, dated 1203 years after Mahavira=677 A.D. *Digambara Tradition.*

4. *Mahāpurāṇa of Jinasena* (ninth century A.D.) left incomplete and completed by *Guṇabhadra* (late ninth century or early tenth century A.D.), the Rāma-Kathā portion composed by Guṇabhadra, in Sanskrit, the work dealing with lives of Śalākā-puruṣas. *Digambara Tradition.*

5. *Mahāpurāṇa of Svayambhu* (c. eighth century A.D.), in Apabhraṃśa, dealing with lives of Śalākāpuruṣas. *Digambara Tradition.*

6. *Mahāpurāṇa, of Puṣpadanta* (c. tenth century A.D.), in Apabhraṃśa, dealing with lives of Śalākāpuruṣas. *Digambara Tradition.*

7. *Caupannamahāpurisa-cariyam, of Śilāṅkācārya* (V.S. 925=868 A.D.), in Prakrit, dealing with lives of 54 S'alākāpuruṣas. *S'vetāmbara Tradition.* The Rāma story has the title *Rāma-Lakkhaṇa-cariyam.*

8. *Kathākos'a of Hariṣeṇa* (c. tenth century A.D.), in Prakrit containing Rāmāyaṇa-Kathānaka (story no. 84) and Sītā-Kathānaka (story no. 89). *Digambara Tradition.*

9. *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣa-carita,* of Ācārya Hemacandra (twelfth century A D.), in Sanskrit, giving lives of 63 Śalākāpuruṣas. *Śvetāmbara Tradition.*

10. *Sītā-Rāvaṇa-Kathānakam* with Svopajna-ṭikā on Yogaśāstra, by Ācārya Hemacandra (twelfth century A.D.), in Sanskrit. *Śvetāmbara Tradition.*

11. Kahāvali of *Bhadreśva Sūri* (c. eleventh century A.D.) in Prakrit, giving accounts of Śalākāpuruṣas. Still in manuscript form. *Śvetāmbara Tradition.*

The above works give three main Jaina versions of Rāma-Kathā which are shown below in tabulated form.

The Jaina Rāmāyaṇa Traditions

version or school of Vimala, Vimala is neither Śve. nor Dig. alone. *Prākrit* (1) Caupannamahāpurisacarīyam of Śīlānka. (2) only casual treatment of some incidents in Dhurtākhyāna of Haribhara sūri, 7th cent. A.D. (3) Kahāvali of Bhadreśvara. *Sanskrit* (1) Padmapurāṇa of Raviṣeṇa, Dig. (2) casual treatment in Dharmaparīkṣā of Amitagati, (1014 (A.D.) Dig. (3) Yogaśastra-vṛiti of Hemacandra, Śve. (4) Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣa-c of Hemachandra. Śve. (5) Śatrunjaya-Māhātmya of Dhaneśvara (14th cent.) Śve. *Apabhramśa* (1) Paumacariu of Svayambhu. Dig.	Samghadāsa's version, PKT., Śve. and Hariṣeṇa's account PKT., Dig. Both closely follow Vālmīki.	version or school of Guṇabhadra A. Sanskrit (1) Puṇyacandrodaya of Kṛṣṇa (16th century) Dig. *B. Apabhramśa* (1) Mahāpurāṇa of Puṣpadanta. Dig.

Besides the above, there are several later Jaina works referring partly or fully to the Rāma story. They are as under:

Sīyācariyam and Rāmalakkhaṇacariyam of Bhuvanatuṅga sūri.

Rāmāyaṇa or Rāmadevapurāṇa of Jinadāsa (c. 15th cent.).

Rāmacarita of Padmadevavijaya gaṇi (c.. 16th cent.).

Rāmacarita of Somadeva sūri (c. 16th cent.).

Laghu-Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita of Ācārya Somaprabha (c. 15th cent.).

Padmapurāṇa (Balabhadrapurāṇa) of Raidhu, in Apabhramśa, (15th cent.)

Pampa-Rāmāyaṇa (also called Rāmacandra-carita) in Kannada, by Nāgacandra alias Abhinava-Pampa (c. 11th cent.)

Añjanā-Pavanañjaya-Nāṭaka (also called Maithilīkalyāṇa), of Hastimalla (c. 1290 A.D.), in Sanskrit, mainly based on Paumacariyam of Vimala, Rev. Bulcke has also referred to some more Kannada Jaina works, viz., Puṇyāsravakathāsāra, Rāmāyaṇa of Kumudendu (16th cent.), Rāmavijayacarita of Devappa (16th cent.), Rāmakathāvatāra of Devacandra (18th cent.), Jaina Rāmāyaṇa of Candrasāgara Varni (19th cent.)

Devi Prasada Mishra, in his unpublished Thesis on Cultural Study of some Jaina Purāṇas, has also noted some more Apabhramśa works, namely, Padma-purāṇa of Somadeva (V. S. 1650=1600 A.D.), Padma-purāṇa of Dharmakīrti (1612 A.D.), Padmapurāṇa of Bhaṭṭāraka Candrakīrti (c. 17th cent.), Padmapurāṇa of Candrasāgara (date not given), and Padmapurāṇa of Śricandra (date not given).

Devi Prasad Mishra has also noted the following Jaina works in Sanskrit language, but the dates are not mentioned:

Padma-Mahākāvya of Śubhavardhana gaṇi, Rāmacarita of Padmanātha, Padma-Purāṇa-Pañjikā by Prabhācandra or Śrīcandra, a Sītā-Carita of unknown authorship, a Sītā Carita by Śānti sūri, another Sītā-Carita by Brahmanemidatta, and a fourth one by Amaradāsa.

Amongst works dealing with lives of 63 Śalākāpuruṣas, Devi Prasad Mishra further notes the following Jaina works:

Triṣaṣṭi-Mahāpurāṇa (or simply Mahāpurāṇa) by Malliṣeṇac Śaka year 969-1047 A.D.), Purāṇasāra of Śrīcandra (V.S. 1080= 1023 A.D.), Purāṇasārasaṃgraha of Vasunandi (c. 11th-13th cent. A.D.), Triṣaṣṭi-smṛit-śāstra of Pandit Ās'ādhara (V.S.1292), Ādipurāṇa of Sakalakīrti (V.S. 1520), Caupanna-mahāpurisacariyam of Āsaḍa (?) (V.S. 1290), Mahāpuruṣacarita of Merutuṅga (1306 A.D.), Triṣaṣṭiśalākā-puruṣacarita of one Vimala sūri (date not given) and another work of same title by one Vajrasena (date not given).

The Anuyogadvāra sūtra, a Jaina canonical work, said to have been composed by Ārya Rakṣita sūri, is assigned to c. second century A.D. by Muni Punyavijayaji and Dalsukha Malavania who published a critical edition of the text. In Sūtra no. 49, this text lists works which are *laukika* and followed by the *mithyādṛṣṭis*, i.e., non-Jaina sects. The list starts with the names *Bhāraham*, *Rāmāyaṇam* and includes works like *Koḍillayam*, *Ghoḍamuham*, *Kanagasattari*, *Vaisesiyam*, *Saṭṭhitantam*, *Kāvilam*, *Māḍharam*, etc. It is therefore quite clear that before the authors of the Vasudeva-hiṇḍi, and the Paumacariyam wrote their accounts, both the Bhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa were known to the Jainas, as popular religious texts of the non-Jaina faith.

The *Nandi-sūtra* of Deva Vācaka, assigned to sometime before 523 V.S., perhaps composed between c. 500 and 523 V.S., also refers to *Bhāraham*, *Rāmāyaṇam*, *Koḍillayam* etc., in sūtra no. 72, as *mithyā-śruta*, i.e., false doctrine.

According to the Praśasti at the end of Vimala sūri's *Paumacariyam* (henceforth referred to as PCV)., the work was composed 530 years after Mahāvīra's Nirvāṇa, i.e., in c. 4 A.D., and according to Jacobi's calculation of the date of Mahāvīra's Nirvaṇa, in c. 63 A.D., but since Vimala calls himself as belonging to Nāila-Vaṃśa which originated with a disciple of Vajrasena, and as the date of Vajrasena is 580 to 600 after Mahāvīra's according to Jacobi's calculation, and as Vimala sūri must have lived a few generations after the origin of Nāila-Vaṃśa, Vimala cannot be placed before second century A.D. The colophon of PCV. seems to be a later addition as Vimala is called here a *Pūrva-dhara*, but no Jaina lists of Pūrvadharas mention his name. The person who added the date mistook 530 after Mahāvīra for 530 V.S., as rightly suggested by K. R. Chandra. Such cases are not unknown in Jaina traditions. For example, the date of fall of Valabhi is given as 845 years after Mahāvīra but actually it is 845 years of the Vikrama era. Both Jacobi and V. M. Kulkarni assign the *Paumacariyam* to c. third-fourth century A.D.

K. R. Chandra has advanced several arguments in support of his view. One very appealing evidence is that in PCV., 98.66, the author says that Lavaṇa and Aṅkuśa, the two sons of Rāma, subdued during their Digvijaya the Ānandas. But the Ānandas who succeeded the Bṛhatpalāyanas and ruled over Guntur Region, Andhra Pradesh rose to power in the fourth century A.D.

Vāsudevahiṇḍi of Samghadāsa Gaṇi, as shown by the analysis of Alsdorf, B. J. Sandesara and Muni Punyavijayaji is earlier than c. 600 A.D., and probably dates from the fifth century A.D.

In the *Vāsudevahiṇḍī*, prathama khaṇḍa, the Rāmāyaṇam is given in the fourteenth section called Mayaṇavegālanbho.

Sanghadasa Gani's version of Ramayana from Vasudevahindi

In the race of Bali were born, in order, Sahasragrīva, Pañcaśatagrīva, Śatagrīva, Pancāśadgrīva, and Vimśatigrīva. Vimśatigriva had four wives, namely, Devavarṇinī, Vakrā, Kaikeyi (probably a scribal error for Kekasī) and Puṣpakūṭa. Devavarṇini had four sons, Soma, Yama, Varuṇa and Vaiśramaṇa. Kaikeyī had three sons, Rāmaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa, and Vibhīṣaṇa, two daughters, Trijaṭā and Śūrpaṇakhā. Of Vakrā were born, Mahodara, Mahāratha, Mahāpāśa and Khara, and a daughter Āśālikā. Of Puṣpakūṭā were born Trisāra, Dvisāra, Vidyujjihva, and a daughter Kumbhīnāsā. On account of conflict with Soma, Yama and others, Rāmaṇa went away to settle in Lankādvīpa where he mastered the Prajñapti-Vidyā which gave him mastery over Vidyādhara kings.

Once Maya, a Vidyādhara king, offered his daughter Mandodarī to Rāmaṇa. It was predicted that the first child of Mandodarī would be the cause of annihilation of her family. Rāmaṇa decided to abandon the first child.

In Ayodhyā ruled Daśaratha who had three queens, Kauśalyā, Kaikeyī and Sumitrā. Rāma was born of Kauśalyā, Lakṣmaṇa of Sumitrā and Bharata and Śatrughna were born of Kaikeyī. Mandodarī gave birth to a daughter who was put in a jewel-box. The minister who was asked to desert it took the box to a park of Janaka, the ruler of Mithilā. He placed it in front of a plough in a park-ground and informed Janaka that the girl had sprung from a furrow. The girl was handed over to Janaka's queen Dhāriṇi: When the girl, called Sītā, grew up, a svayamvara was arranged wherein Sīta chose Rāma as her husband. Rāma's other brothers were also given maidens in marriage.

Now, once in the past, Daśaratha, who was pleased with Kaikeyī for her skill in attending to relatives, had offered her a boon which Kaikeyī kept in pending. Again, during a fight with a frontier king, when Daśaratha was taken prisoner, Kaikeyī boldly and skilfully took leadership, defeated the enemy and freed Daśaratha. The husband asked her to choose a boon. This also she kept in reserve for a future opportunity.

After many years, when Daśaratha grew old, he ordered Rāma's coronation. Crooked Mantharā reported the news to Kaikeyī who rejoiced on hearing the news. But Mantharā instigated Kaikeyī to demand fulfilment of the two boons by way of Bharata's coronation and Rāma's exile in forest for twelve years, so that Kaikeyī may not have to wait upon Kauśalyā. Rāma was ultimately asked to act in such a manner that Daśaratha would remain true to his word. Accompanied by Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma set out to lead the life of an exile. Unable to bear separation from Rāma, Daśaratha died, lamenting his fate.

When Bharata returned from his maternal uncle's place, he rebuked his mother and went to meet Rāma. Rāma was requested to return to Ayodhyā and rule but Rāma declined and at Bharata's request, he gave his sandals to Bharata.

Proceeding southwards, Rāma arrived at *Vijanasthāna*, where once Śūrpaṇakhā, enamoured of Rāma's beauty, asked for sensuous pleasures with him. Rāma refused to enjoy another's wife and Sītā scolded her for her shamelessness. Śūrpaṇakhā threatened to kill Sītā. Thinking that a woman should not be killed, Rāma simply cut ears and nose of Śūrpaṇakhā and let her go. Śūrpaṇakhā went and complained to Khara-dūṣaṇa. (The author sometimes speaks of Khara-dūṣaṇa in singular as *Puttam* and sometimes in plural as *gayā*, *ruṭṭhā*, etc.). Khara and Dūṣaṇa promised to take revenge, but Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa killed them. Śūrpaṇakhā then approached her brother Rāmaṇa and asked him to kidnap Śītā who was thought to be fit for Rāmaṇa's harem.

Rāmaṇa then asked his minister Mārīca to go near Rāma's āśrama in the form of a golden deer and entice the two brothers away. Thus Rāmaṇa abducted Śītā. Rāmaṇa was intercepted by Jaṭāyu, a Vidyadhāra, but defeating him, Rāmaṇa went to Lankā via Kiṣkindhigiri. During search of Sītā, Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa met Jaṭāyu who gave the report of Sītā. The two brothers then went to Kiṣkindhi mountain where lived two Vidyādhara brothers, Vālin and Sugrīva. During fight on account of a woman, Vālin had defeated Sugrīva. The latter, along with his ministers Hanumat and Jāmbuvat, was then staying in a Jaina temple. With fire as their witness, Rāma and Sugrīva made a pact of mutual help. After testing Rāma's strength, Sugrīva assigned to Rāma the task of slaying Vālin. Vālin and Sugrīva being exactly alike in form, during their duel, Rāma could not distinguish between the two brothers and Sugrīva was defeated. Sugrīva was then made to wear a garland of flowers and in the next fight Rāma killed Vālin with a single arrow and placed Sugrīva on the throne. Hanumat then proceeded to get Sītā's tidings and returning, reported, Śītā's whereabouts.

Then, at Rāma's command, Sugrīva sent Vidyādharas to Bharata who despatched the fourfold army to fight Rāmaṇa. When the army reached the sea-shore a bridge was built over the ocean. Crossing over the bridge, they encamped on Suvela near Lankā but Ramaṇa did not care for Rāma.

Rāmaṇa disregarded Vibhīṣaṇa's advice to return Śītā and save their race. Vibhīṣaṇa, along with his four councellors, went over to Rāma. During war, seeing Rāma's side overpowering, Rāmaṇa, started invoking the all powerful lore (Vīdyā) called Jvālavatī. But Rāma's soldiers entered Lankā and attacked, at which, Rāmaṇa, leaving the śādhana, came forth to fight a grim battle. Lakṣhmaṇa engaged him in a single combat. As a last resort, Rāmana hurled the Cakra at Lakṣmana but the cakra did no harm to Lakṣmaṇa who took it up and hurled it back at Rāmana. Cutting off Rāmaṇa's head, the weapon returned to Lakṣmaṇa who was then declared as the eighth Vāsudeva and honoured by the gods.

Sītā was then returned to Rāma by Vibhīṣaṇa. The fire ordeal is omitted in this text. Rāma, Sītā and others returned to Ayodhyā in vimānas. Bharata and Śatrughna honoured Rāma who was then crowned king. Later on, Rāma, assisted by Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa conquered half of the Bhārata kṣetra.

V. M. Kulkarni has given a comparative table of the geneologies of Rāma and Rāvaṇa from the works of Vālmīki and Saṅghadāsa (Journal of the Oriental Institute, Vol, II, p. 133). He has also shown where Saṅghadāsa differs from Vālmīki, e.g., regarding Mandodarī's marriage, Sīta's birth, etc. Saṅghadāsa omits reference to the bending of Śiva's bow in the svayamvara. While Śatrughna is the son of Sumitrā according to Vālmīki he is the son of Kaikeyī according to Saṅghadāsa. The period of Rāma's exile is 12 years according to Saṅghadāsa instead of 14 of Vālmīki. According to Saṅghadāsa and most of Jaina accounts it is Lakṣmaṇa who kills Rāvaṇa. With the coronation of Rāma, the story, given by Saṅghadāsa under the title *Rāmāyaṇam*, ends.

Saṅghadāsa's brief account largely follows the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki. The attempt to give it a Jaina colour is obvious. Since Saṅghadāsa's account is very brief and since it mainly follows the Hindu epic, it would be reasonable to suspect that it is the first attempt, and earlier than that of Vimala suri, who makes many more changes and innovations and who vehemently attacks the Hindu epic for its absurdities and contradictions. Saṅghadāsa does not seem to believe that Rāvaṇa had ten heads since he gives names, like Śatagriva, etc., for Rāvaṇa's ancestors suggesting that it was a practice to give such names.

The versions of Saṅghadāsa and Hariṣeṇa (Bṛhat-kathā-kośa) are very near to Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa and are obviously based on the latter. The version of Vimala is typical, omitting all supernatural elements and differing from Vālmīki in certain respects. However Vimala clearly knew Vālmīki's work and his work is based on the Hindu epic in several respects, even though it differs in giving a Jaina colour and in certain details. Guṇabhadra's work differs both from Vimala and Vālmīki in certain important details and is therefore a new Jaina version itself. However, in all the three main Jaina versions, there are some common elements pointed out by Kulkarni as under:

Daśaratha of Ikṣvāku family ruled over Ayodhyā and Janaka ruled over Videha. Daśaratha had four princes, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Śatrughna. Janaka had a daughter Sītā who was married to Rāma. A mighty King Rāvaṇa, ruling over Lankā, abducted Sītā when Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā were living in a forest. During their search of Sītā, the two brothers met Sugrīva and Hanumān. Sugrīva, who was deprived of his rightful place in Kiṣkindhā by his brother Vālin, sought Rāma's alliance. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa helped Sugrīva to regain the kingdom of Kiṣkindhā. With the army of Sugrīva, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa marched against Lankā. Vibhīṣaṇa, the righteous brother of Rāvaṇa goes over to Rāma's side. In the ensuing terrible war, Rāvaṇa is killed and Vibhīṣaṇa is crowned King of Lankā, and Rāma is united with Sītā. Generally, in the Jaina versions, it is Lakṣmaṇa who kills Rāvaṇa. Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā return to Ayodhyā. In most of the Jaina accounts, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, the eighth Baladeva and Vāsudeva respectively, had many queens. Rāma is said to have 8000 queens. After Lakṣmaṇa's death, Rāma becomes a Jaina monk and practising austerities, attains mokṣa. Lakṣmaṇa, as he does not accept the path laid down by the Jains, sinks into hell. Rāvaṇa, too, goes to hell on account of his misdeeds. After passing through many births both attain mokṣa. Sītā, after leading the life of an Āryikā (nun), is born in heaven, but she, too, ultimately obtains mokṣa.

Paumacariyam of Vimala Suri

According to Vimala Sūri the *Pauma-Cariya, i.e.*, the life story of Padma (Rāma) was formerly in the form of a list of names (*nāmāvaliyanibaddham*) and was handed down to him in regular succession from teacher to pupil. Vimala Sūri (PCV ii. 116-117) says that the Rāmāyaṇa stories (of the Hindus) are certainly full of lies, absurdities, and contradictions. He thinks that the absurdities related about the lives of Rāma, Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa and others are not worthy of belief. To remove all such inconsistencies and incredible elements found in the popular Rāmāyaṇa stories he undertook the composition of the *Paumacariyam*. According to Vimala, Rāvaṇa was neither ten-headed nor a meat-eater. The author laughs at the story of Rāma killing a golden deer and he does not approve of the story of Rāma's treacherous killing of Vālin. The poet says that he is presenting faithfully the life of Rāma as proclaimed by Mahāvīra himself. The poet is intent on the propagation of the teachings of Jainism through this work (cf. PCV. 118. 112-113).

For Vimala Sūri, the Rākṣasas are not man-eating demons of hideous looks, nor are the Vānaras animals having long tails. According to PCV as well as most of the Jaina accounts of the Rāma story, the Vānaras are, in reality, a race of Vidyādharas, 'a class of beings endowed with supernatural qualities, if not human beings in the correct sense of the term'. The Vidyādharas are highly civilised beings who are said to adhere to the vow of Ahimsā. The dynasty of Vidyādharas at Lankā came to be called Rākṣasas after a great celebrated Vidyādhara named Rākṣasa (PCV. 5, 251-252, 257). The Vidyādharas of Kiṣkindhipura received the name Vānaras because of their custom of wearing pictures of monkeys as symbols or totems on their banners and crowns (PCV. 6. 86-90).

Vimala represents Kaikeyī as a good woman who is prepared to let her husband accept asceticism and as a fond mother with attachment to her son. She does not demand Rāma's exile. Vālin, a mighty Vidyādhara hero, appoints Sugrīva to the throne and himself becomes a Jaina monk. This acquits Vālin of the shameful conduct of living with his brother's wife, and Rāma of the charge of treacherously slaying Vālin. Lakṣmaṇa kills Śambuka by accident which exonarates Rāma from the guilt of killing an ascetic practising penance. Rāvaṇa is a pious and devout Jaina who restores ruined Jaina shrines. His only weakness is his passionate nature. According to Vimala Sūri, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Hanumat had 8,000, 16,000 and 100 wives respectively. Sagara and Hariṣeṇa, two sovereign rulers, had each 64,000 wives. Rāvaṇa had, at a time, married 6000 wives. Lakṣmaṇa is shown to have sunk into hell for having failed to adopt Jaina Dharma. Kaikeyī, Sīta and others become Jaina nuns. It is Lakṣmaṇa who kills Rāvaṇa.

Vimala omits the incident of killing the golden deer. Rāma observing vrata cannot be made to kill a deer. The incidents of illusory head of Rāma and the beheading of Māyā-Sītā are left out. The incidents of the fire-ordeal of Sītā, and of Rāvaṇa carrying away Rambhā, the lady love of Nalakūbara, and the curse of Nalakūbara are also omitted.

The introduction of Vidyādhara Bhāmaṇḍala's episode is an innovation of Vimala. When Nārada showed the painting of Sītā to Bhāmaṇḍala the latter decides to marry Sītā. Seeing the pining Bhāmaṇḍala, his father Candragati asks a Vidyādhara to bring Janaka before him by any means. When brought in his presence, Janaka tells him that he has already p-omised Sītā to Rāma when the latter helped Janaka in a fight against the *mlecchas*. Then Candragati gives to Janaka the Vajrāvarta bow and says that if Rāma is able to tie its string then only can Sītā be given in marriage to Rāma. Rāma with his brothers attends the svayamvara of Sītā and ties the string of the bow. Lakṣmaṇa also does so. Rāma is married to Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa is given 18 maidens in marriage by Vidyādhara kings. Lakṣmaṇa lifting the Kotiśilā reminds us of the Rāmāyaṇa story of Rāma piercing with one arrow seven Sāla-trees standng in a line.

Rāma's mother is here called Aparājitā and Śatrughna is said to have been born of Kaikeyī. According to Vimala, Kharadūṣaṇa is one individual who is husband of Rāvaṇa's sister Candranakhā. According to Vālmīki, Khara is Rāvaṇa's brother and Dūṣaṇa is one of his generals. According to Vimala, Indrajit and Meghanāda are two different persons, both sons of Rāvaṇa.

In PCV., canto 7, Indra is the Vidyādhara chief who appoints four Lokapālas, whose elephant is Airāvata, whose minister is Bṛhaspati, and who has the vajra weapon. His son is Jayanta, But while describing the fight between Rāvaṇa and Indra, Vimala refers to Indra as *suravai*, *surinda*, *sakko*, etc., for the same Indra who is called a Vidyādhara chief. Referring to this, V. M. Kulkarni writes, 'although Vimala professes to give the story of Rāma as handed down by Jaina traditions, in actual practice he reveals, though unconsciously his source. *viz.*, the Vālmīki-Rāmayāṇa. Otherwise how could he condemn in one breath the defeat of the overlord of gods-Indra and describe Indra—the Vidyādhara chief—as Surendra, Surādhipa, etc. For, in canto 2, Vimala, criticising Vālmīki's version says : ' Indra, though he rules over gods and men, is said to have been taken captive to Lankā by Rāvaṇa ! One will be reduced to a heap of ashes at the mere thought of him who has the best elephant Airāvata and the unfailing weapon vajra. At that rate we might as well affirm that the lion is overcome by gazelle, the elephant by dog ! The Rāmayana stories are most certainly lies.'

Like Saṅghadāsa and Guṇabhadra (the author of *Uttara-purāna*), Vimala says that Sītā was born of Mandodarī and Rāvaṇa. According to Vimala, Bhāmaṇḍala and Sītā were born as twins to Videhā by Janaka. The sons of Sītā are said to have fought against Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. It is Lakṣmaṇa who kills Śambuka, the son of Candranakhā (Śurpaṇakhā).

The Padma-Purana of Ravisena

The *Padma-Purāṇa* of Raviṣeṇa, in Sanskrit, is agreeing with the PCV. in all essential points. Vimala's work contains some Śvetāmbara elements or beliefs, some Digambara ones and some which are independent of both the sects. Kulkarni feels that Vimala's work is still presumably a Śvetāmbara work. Raviṣeṇa has introduced, wherever possible, Digambara traits and removed the Śvetāmbara features of PCV.

According to Raviṣeṇa, Suprabhā is the fourth queen of Daśaratha and Śatrughna is born of her. The image of Janaka, too, is destroyed by Vibhīṣaṇa. Vajrāvarta and Sagrāvarta are two bows bent by Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa on the occasion of Sītā-svayamvara. Bharata's wife is called Loka-Sundarī. Hanumat sides with Rāma's two sons who are twins. God Meṣa-Ketana assists Sītā in her fire-ordeal.

Paumacariyam of Svayambhu

Svayambhu himself states that he is presenting the Rāma story as given by Raviṣeṇa. But he does not blindly imitate Raviṣeṇa, and divides his work into five different Kāṇḍas. Four Kāṇḍas have the same titles as in Vālmīki but the Bālakāṇḍa is called Vidyādharakāṇḍa, while names of Araṇya and Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍas are not found. These two Kāṇḍas are not separated. As Kulkarni puts it, the author effects 'omissions, abridgements, additions, and alterations with a view to presenting the story in a more attractive and poetic form. His changes however do not relate to the principal story of Rāma but to such topics as Kṣetravarṇanā, Kālavarṇanā, Pūrvabhavavarṇanā, Upākhyānas and descriptions'.

Caupannamahapurisacariyam of Silankacarya

Śīlāṅkācārya declares that he is briefly narrating the life story of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa which is dsescribed at length in works like the PCV. He however introduced, in his work, some remarkable features from Vālmīki's work directly possibly because of their vide popularity in his days or indirectly through the version of Saṅghadāsa. These features include the golden deer episode and the Vāli-episode. His protrayal of Rāvaṇa's character is more after Vālmīki's. Vimala's Rāvaṇa is a pious Jaina with only one defect of passion for Sītā.

Winternitz feels that so far as the source of Hemachandra in his Triṣaṣṭi° is concerned it is (mainly) PCV. and the work of Śīlāṅka.

Uttarapurana of Gunabhadra

In the city of Vārāṇasī lived king Daśaratha whose queen Subālā gave birth to Rāma, the eighth Balabhadra. Kaikeyī, another queen, gave birth to Lakṣmaṇa, born with the mark of Cakra. Later when the two princes were entering their youth, Daśaratha went to live in Ayodhyā, a seat of the Ikṣvāku family, to which Daśaratha also belonged. Ayodhyā was ruled by Sagara whose whole family was destroyed on account of sinful practice of sacrifices involving animal slaughter. There in Ayodhyā were born, to some other queen of Daśaratha, two more princes, Bharata and Śatrughna.

At Mithila was ruling Janaka. To his queen Vasudhā was born a beautiful princess called Sītā. Once Janaka wished to perform a sacrifice. Fearing obstacles from the Vidyādharas, especially from the Vidyadhara king Rāvaṇa, Janaka requested

Daśaratha to send his princes Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa for protecting the rite, and promised to give Sītā in marriage to Rāma. Here the author introduces a long story of earlier birth of the two princes and utilises it for showing that those who kill animals in sacrifice suffer and go to hell. Then he begins in canto 68 the story of Rāvaṇa Vidyādhara, son of Pulastya, the son of Pañcāśadgrīva, the son of Śatagrīva, the son of Sahasragrīva, ruling at Lankā. A daughter was born to Mandodarī the queen of Rāvaṇa. Since astrologers predicted that the child would be the cause of annihilation of Rāvaṇa, she was deserted. Entrusted with the task of deserting the child, Mārīca left the box containing the child in some ground in Mithilā. During ploughing of the land, the box came out and the child was handed over to king Janaka who called her Sītā. When Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa came to Mithilā, Sītā was given in marriage to Rāma. Rāma later married seven more beautiful princesss and Lakṣmaṇa married sixteen at the instance of Daśaratha. Both the brothers expressed a desire to live in Vāraṇāsī where they carried on administration to the satisfaction of the local people. Nārada went to Rāvaṇa and instigated him that Janaka had given away his beautiful daughter in marriage to Rāma. Rāvaṇa sent Sūrpaṇakhā to Vārāṇasī on a mission to persuade Sītā to love Rāvaṇa. At that time Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa had gone to Citrakūṭa-udyāna for vana-krīḍā. Śūrpaṇakhā appeared and seeing Rāma became passionately attached to him. Taking the form of an old woman she tried to persuade Sītā but in vain. Returning she reported to Rāvaṇa that Sītā was a woman of pure character. Enraged, Rāvaṇa went to Citrakūṭa in his Puṣpaka vimāna along with Mārīca, who took the form of a deer of varieagated colours. Sītā became fond of it and Rāma ran after the deer to catch it but dragging him away the deer disappeared. During the interval, Rāvaṇa, assuming the form of Rāma, approached and persuaded Sītā to ride on the palanquin into which the Puṣpaka vimāna was miraculously transformed. Rāvaṇa then carried off Sītā to Laṅkā. When Rāma returned, he was greatly dejected at finding Sītā missing. A messenger came with a letter from Daśaratha. The letter revealed that Sītā was abducted by Rāvaṇa. Then Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Śatrughna came and consoled Rāma and began planning ways to get back Sītā. At this juncture, two Vidyādharas, Sugrīva of Kilakila city, brother of Vāli, and Amitateja, also called Aṇumān, the son of

Prabhañjana, approached Rāma and offered assistance. Aṇumān went and found out Sītā in Laṅkā and showed her Rāma's signet ring returned to Rāma and reported. Rāvaṇa refused Anumān's suggestion of returning Sītā to Rāma. Vāli sent an offer of help to Rāma but, suspecting Vāli's association with Rāvaṇa as well, Rāma asked Vāli to lend his elephant which was refused by Vāli and a battle took place wherein Lakṣmaṇa killed Vāli with an arrow. Sugrīva was given the kingdom ruled by Vāli, at Kiṣkindhā.

In war, Rāvaṇa is ultimately killed by Lakṣmaṇa with the help of cakra. As usual with Jaina versions, Lakṣmaṇa goes to hell after death, and Rāma, turning a pious Jaina monk later in life, attains Mokṣa.

Kulkarni has shown that Guṇabhadra shares with Vālmīki the following features : Maināmati's curse on Rāvaṇa which corresponds with Vedavatī's curse in Vālmīki's work, the names Daśānana, Kumbhakarṇa, Śūrpaṇakhā and Vibhīṣaṇa, the incident of the golden deer, the slaying of Vālin, Rāma's giving his signet ring to Hanuman as *abhijñāna*, Hanumān's assuming the form of a bee (a cat accordng to Vālmīki), while entering Lankā, Vibhīṣaṇa's alliance with Rāma, Hanumat's (Aṇumar according to Guṇabhadra) laying waste the grove and the burning of Lankā, causing disturbance to Rāvaṇa during his Vidyāsādhana, cutting off the illusory head of Sītā and throwing it in front of Rāma, depicting Rāvaṇa as *adhama*, *khala*, etc. The later history of Rāma is almost wholly absent in Guṇabhadra.

Kulkarni has elaborately discussed and refuted D.C. Sen's view that there were two distinct legends—an early Northern Aryan legend about Rāma without any connection with the Vānaras and the Rākṣasas, and a Southern Dravidian legend in which Rāvaṇa figures independent of all touch with Rāma. Sen has argued that 'the Jaina Rāmāyaṇa begins with the description of the Rākṣasas and monkeys and introduces Rāma only in the later chapters.' (Sen is referring to Hemachandra's *Triṣaṣṭi°*). This is quite unlike what we find in the great epic. The Rāmāyaṇa as a matter of course should give the story of Rāma first. The supposition naturally grows that the story of Rāvaṇa and of the monkeys had been widely known in Southern India and the Northern legend was introduced, later on as a supplementary story.

Kulkarni (Journal of the Oriental Institute, vol. IX, pp. 285 ff.) refuting the view says that the Uttarakāṇḍa of Vālmīki, though a later addition, was already known to the author of the *Paumacariyam* (PCV). The Uttarakāṇḍa deals with events both antecedent and subsequent to the original poem matter, and the early history of Rāvaṇa, the Rākṣaṣas and the Vānara families fills nearly forty cantos in the Uttarakāṇḍa and we have full account of Rāvaṇa's wars with gods, his conquest of Lankā, etc. What Vimala Suri does is that he first deals with the various dynastics of the Rākṣasas and the Vānaras, the world conquest of Rāvaṇa, etc. Kulkarni writes, 'the difference in the treatment of the character of Rāvaṇa and the Vānara families, as between the Vālmīki Rāmāyana and the Jaina versions of the story, can all be explained as due to difference of purpose and emphasis. It is not necessary to assume an independent Rāvaṇa legend as a hypothesis to explain these differences, unless there is an independent evidence to prove the existence of such a legend.

Again, regarding the Daśaratha Jātaka being the source of Guṇabhadra's version, Kulkarni argues as follows : Granted that the Daśaratha Jātaka is older than Guṇabhadra's *Uttara-Purāna*, but the Daśaratha Jātaka is a distorted version of the story of Rāma as given in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Vālmīki-Rāmāyaṇa.* 'So merely because the latter history of Rāma is absent both in the Daśaratha Jātaka and Guṇabhadra's version, we cannot say that the former is the source of the latter. It is true that the Jātaka speaks of Daśaratha as ruler of Vārāṇasī, and Guṇabhadra represents him as shifting his Capital from Vārāṇasī to Ayodhyā, but this is too slender a thread to connect the two stories. The Jātaka speaks of Rāma and Sītā as brother and sister staying in the Himalayas at Daśaratha's suggestion. All such things are absent in Jaina version. There is no ground to believe that the Daśaratha Jātaka and the *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* are sources of Guṇabhadra's version.

Bhadresvara's Kahavali

This is a huge unpublished work in Prakrit, preserved in only one manuscript, and giving lives of the Śalākāpuruṣas of Jaina belief. According to C. D. Dalal, Bhadreśvara lived in the age of Solanki King Karna of Gujarat (A.D. 1064-94). According to Jacobi, Bhadreśvara lived in c. 1100-1150 V.S. The Rāma story opens with *Rāmāyaṇa kahā bhaṇṇai*, etc. Rama is otherwise called Mahāpauma-cakkavatti. Rāvaṇa is called Rāmaṇa. Bhadreśvara's short account is closely following Vimala's long poem excepting two important and original features that he added. Not only does Bhadraeśvara adopt the story of Vimala but he frequently borrows phrases and lines from this source. Bhadreśvara's is a continuous prose narrative interspersed with verse, without any division into ucchvāsas etc., while PCV. is entirely in verse divided into several cantos. Bhadreśvara lightly changes the order of narration. He opens with an account of the dynasty of Rāma. He omits detailed descriptions of forests, seasons, etc., and long didactic sermons. He says that Padma is popularly known as Rāma, that Nārāyaṇa is well-known as Lakṣmaṇa amongst people. Candranakhī is well-known as Śurpaṇakhā, Bhānukarṇa as Kumbhakarṇa and so on. Obviously, as Kulkarni rightly remarks, 'the Jaina writers did not succeed in their attempt to popularise the names given by them to some of the important characters in the Hindu Rāmāyaṇa.'

There are some minor elements in which *Kahāvali* differs from its model PCV. But the most important contribution of Bhadreśvara lies in addition made by him to the later story of Rāma. Sītā has a dream indicating to her the birth of two heroic sons. Her co-wives, becoming jealous at this, manage to get Rāvaṇa's feet delineated by Sītā and try to poison Rāma's mind stating that Sītā still remembers Rāvaṇa. But Rāma continues to love and attend to Sītā. But the co-wives of Sītā gave publicity to the picture-incident amongst the people, through their maid-servants. When Sītā's *Dohada* (pregnancy longing) was being fulfilled through Deva-pūjā, and when Rāma and Sītā were witnessing various sports in the pleasure-park, Sītā's right eye throbbed, foreboding some calamity. Rāma consoled her and sent her back to the palace. Dismissing all retinue, Rāma, in disguise returned to the park where he heard people reproaching him for accepting Sītā back from Rāvaṇa who had abducted her. Going back to the palace, Rāma asked his spies, in the presence of Lakṣmaṇa, Vibhīṣaṇa, Sugrīva, Hanūmat and others, to report correctly what they had heard about this scandal. Rāma also said that he himself had heard the same scandal. He then ordered his Senāpati to banish Sītā into some forest. Kṛitāntavadana is asked to abandon Sītā under the pretext of a visit to the Sammeta mountain. This done, Rāma fell into a swoon and regaining consciousness, lamented the loss of Sītā. Lakṣmaṇa consoled him and advised him to make a search for Sītā before it was too late. Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and others flew in a vimāna to the forest but could not find her and thought that probably Sītā was devoured by a tiger or a lion.

Hemacandra too introduces the picture-motif and Rāma's visit to the forest in search of Sītā.

Yogaśāstra-Svopajña-Vṛtti (YSV) and Triṣaṣṭisālākāpuruṣacarita (TSPC)

Through the Rāma story in both the works is by one and the same author, Ācārya Hemacandra, the two accounts betray some divergences. The YSV. version is in general agreement with the PCV. It also shows acquaintance with the *Padmapurāṇa* and the work of Saṅghadāsa. In his TSPC version based on PCV. and *Padmapurāna*, Hemacandra follows Vālmīki in relating the episode of the fight between Vāli and Rāvaṇa. Since Rāvaṇa's face was reflected in a necklace of nine rubies worn by him he was called ten-faced, Daśānana. According to Hemacandra, Daśaratha had four queens, Kauśalyā, Kaikeyī, Sumitrā and Suprabhā, and their respective sons were Rāma, Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna. Rāma married Sītā, the daughter of Janaka and sister of Bhāmaṇḍala. According to YSV., Mantharā instigates Kaikeyī to demand two boons, but in TSPC. Kaikeyī demands only one boon to appoint Bharata to the throne. There is no instigation from Mantharā and Rāma of his own decides to dwell in forest.

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[1] Compare the commentary of Śanticandra on Jambūdvīpaprajñapti, Vol. I., 2nd Vakṣaskāra, sutra 33.

Śīlāṅkācārya in the ninth century called his work caupannamahāpurisa-cariyam.

THE PRAKRIT AND APABHRAṀŚA RĀMĀYAṆAS

H. C. BHAYANI

A. The Lost and Available Works

(a) Introductory

We know that in all the centuries subsequent to Vyāsa's *Mahābhārata* and Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, numberless adaptations, reworkings and translations (of the whole or of particular parts) of those two epics have been produced in numerous Indian and non-Indian languages, down to the present day. As literary media Prakrits were in use side by side with Sanskrit over more than fifteen centuries. So it can be naturally presumed that there must have appeared several compositions on the narrative of Rāma in Prakrit, paralleling those in Sanskrit in both the traditions, Brahminical and Jainistic. In fact such a presumption is amply borne out so far as the Jainistic tradition is concerned: We have with us several full or abridged versions of Jaina Rāmāyaṇas in Prakrit. Nothing has been known however about the Rāmāyaṇa compositions in Prakrit in the Brahminical tradition. Nothing has been preserved and so nobody has noted so far any references to such works, if they were at all composed.

(b) The Brahminical tradition

This utterly hopeless situation is now slightly relieved through an unexpected source. From a few references available in a ninth century work on Prakrit prosody, we come to know for the first time something definite about Brahminical Rāmāyaṇas in Prakrit and Apabhramśa. The *Svayambhū* (*chandas*) of Svayambhū Rāma gives numerous citations from earlier Prakrit and Apabhramśa works to illustrate various metres it defines. This gives us a glimpse into the extensive and rich literature of high excellence that is unfortunately all but lost. Among these citations there are a few in the Prakrit section and slightly more than that in the Apabhraṁśa section which pertain to the theme of Rāmāyaṇa. So far as these Prakrit citations are concerned, we are quite in the dark regarding the exact nature (whether a regular Rāmāyaṇa or otherwise) and character (whether Jain or non-Jain) of their source works. The citation from Kanhadatta (Skt. Kṛṣṇadatta), illustrating the mixture of Gīti and Skandhaka metres relates to the message delivered to Rāvaṇa (either by Aṅgada or by Hanumat), advising him to return Sītā before Rāma's arrows destroy him (*Svayambhūchandas*, I, 13 : 3). The citation from Vaddhamitta (Skt. Vṛddhamitra), illustrating the Ugra variety of the Galitaka metre is considerably obscure, but there is no doubt about the fact that it contains an exhortation to Ravaṇa by somebody desiring him to negotiate peace with Rāma (Sva°, I, 2-3-1). The third citation, from Ṅāgaha, illustrating the Toṭaka metre, describes Rāvaṇa's army discharging volleys of arrows at the monkey hordes. We may speculate that of these, the name Kṛṣṇadatta possibly implies that he was a non-Jain.

Fortunately we are somewhat more informed regarding Svayambhūdeva's citations from an earlier Apabhraṁśa Rāmāyaṇa by a poet named *Caumuha* (Skt. Caturmukha). From bits of information scattered in diverse sources, we can piece together the following account of Caturmukha and his works. He may have flourished in the eighth or seventh century. Acknowledged for centuries as a major Apabhraṁśa poet, he had three extensive epics to his credit. One of these was a Rāmāyaṇa, another a Bhārata and the third one called *Abdhimathana* had for its theme the churning of the ocean by gods and demons. All the three epics were Sandhibandhas. The Sandhibandha was the epic form characteristic of Apabhraṁśa, in which the poem was divided into Sandhis, each of which was subdivided into Kaḍavakas made up of rhyming couplets with a closing piece. These epics contained in the final verse of each section Caturmukha's *nāmānka* or *nāmamudrā*. It was also the name of the author's *iṣṭadeva*. This means that Caturmukha (i.e. Brahman) was the deity our poet worshipped. Caturmukha was a pioneer in evolving the Sandhibandha and Svayambhūdeva's Rāmāyaṇa epic (*Paumaacriya*) was considerably influenced in its form, organization and treatment by the former's Rāma epic. From the citations found in the *Svayambhū* (*chandas*) and in the *Siddhahema* one can form same idea of the great literary worth of Caturmukha's Rāmāyaṇa, although we have no idea of its actual extent, contents and organization.

(c) The Jain Tradition

As to the Jain versions of the Rāmāyaṇa in Prakrit and Apabhraṁśa, we have with us several works of that category. They are listed below :

Paumacariya of Vimala (Pkt.) (4th or 5th century).
The *Vāsudevahiṇḍi* version of Saṅghadāsa (Pkt.) (5th century).
The *Caupannamahāpurisacariya* version of Silāṅka (Pkt.) (868 A.D.)
The *Kahāvali* version of Bhadreśvara (Pkt.) (11th century.)
Paumacriya of Svayambhūdeva (Ap.) (9th century.)
The version in Puṣpadanta's *Mahāpurāṇa* (Ap.) (965-972 A.D.)

These and a few less important versions have been previously compared and studied by several scholars.

B. Alterations and Variations

As the works of Caturmukha and others of the Brahmanical tradition are lost, nothing can be said about their departures, if any, from Vālmīki's version. The Jain versions of the Rāmāyaṇa do not have an all-acceptable common narrative. They follow several traditions. Vimala has a special Jain version which is followed by Svayambhūdeva and Sīlāṇka. Saṅghadāsa mainly follows Vālmīki, while Puṣpadanta follows the Digambara version found with Guṇabhadra, which in its turn is a mixture of Vālmīki and the *Daśaratha Jātaka* versions with some peculiar Jain features added. The detailed comparison and tabulation of departures from Vālmīki are vailable in specialized studies and we need not go into them, as we are concerned here primarily with the implications of the changes and variation in the narrative of Rāma.

It should be noted that the Rāmāyaṇas in Prakrit and Apabhraṁśa do not share amongst themselves a common tradition or character. The same remark applies to the Rāmāyaṇas in

Sanskrit. Differences in the narrative of Rāma follow the religious rather than the linguistic lines, and even in the former case there is anything but uniformity. Leaving aside minor differences, we shall therefore consider the major changes in the Rāma narrative made by the principal and peculiar Jain tradition, and make a few observations about the motivating factors. These remarks have relevance for most of the Jain versions (with some important reservations), irrespective of the language of the works.

As in Jain theology there is no place for a divine creator and Lord of the creation, there is no scope in Jainism, for the avatāra doctrine. So the Jain Rāma can be no more than an illustrious human hero.

Secondly, Jainas have their own conception and scheme of universal history, according to which in each aeon 63 great men, called *Śalākā-puruṣas* or *mahāpuruṣas* appear. Accordingly 24 Tīrthaṅkaras (beginning with Ṛṣabha and ending with Vardhamāna), 12 Cakravartins, 9 Baladevas, 9 Vāsudevas and 9 Prativāsudevas appeared in the current aeon. Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Rāvaṇa made up the eighth set of Baladeva, Vāsudeva and Prativāsudeva respectively. Vāsudevas had half the status of Cakravartins or universal monarchs. A Vāsudeva with the help of his elder brother, a Baladeva, conquers and kills his Prativāsudeva and becomes lord of the three divisions of Bhāratavarṣa. Rāma like all Baladevas had a thousand wives with Sītā, Prabhāvatī, Ratinibhā and Śrīdhāmā as the chief queens. Lakṣmaṇa, like all Vāsudevas, had sixteen thousand queens.

It will be seen that the Jain Rāmāyaṇa has a much more Purāṇic character than the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa. Some of the Jain Rāmāyaṇas are actually designated as Purāṇa (e.g. *Padmapurāṇa, Rāmāyaṇa-purāṇa*). The Jain Rāmāyaṇas also contain some dynastic lists, ākhyānas and upākhyānas. But the spirit and atmosphere are naturally Jainistic. All the characters, including Daśaratha, Janaka, Rāvaṇa, Sugriva, Vālīn, Hanumat and their families are devout Jainas. Jain ascetics loom large in the whole course of the narrative and throughout occasions are provided for preaching Jain religion and philosophy.

The Jain view of the world has a comparatively more rationalistic strain. So the mythical monkeys and monsters of the original

Rāma narrative are changed so as to be acceptable to reason and common sense. The monkeys and monsters become Vidyādharas, *i.e.* types of human beings possessing superhuman and magic powers acquired through severe austerities. Rāvaṇa too was a Vidyādhara king, having a normal human form. His designations, Daśagrīva, Daśamukha, etc. are given a rationalistic explanation through an episode. He is a very devout Jain and quite virtuous, abduction of Sītā being the only flaw in his otherwise admirable conduct. Similarly the incident of Setubandha is rationalized by creating two Vidyādhara kings named Samudra and Setu, who were loyal to Rāvaṇa and hostile to Rāma, and so they were defeated by Nala and Nīla.

Several other characters of the Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* have been similarly transformed. According to the Jain version, Kaikeyī wanted to stop Bharata from becoming a monk (following Dasaratha), and hence she contrived so as to saddle him with the responsibilities of kingship. Rāma voluntarily accepted exile out of love for Bharata.

Vālīn of the Jainas was a powerful Vidyādhara king and a devout Jain, who practised austerities and attained liberation. It was another Vidyādhara called Sāhasagati, who being enamoured of Tārā impersonated Sugrīva, and Rāma as an ally of the latter killed him. Regarding the Śambūka episode also, the Jain version differs : Śambūka was a son of Rāvaṇa's sister Candranakhā (i.e. Śūrpaṇakhā) and he was accidently killed by Lakṣmaṇa.

' The few typical and basic alterations described above would suffice to give some ideas of the general orientation of the Jaina Rāmacarita. As to the spirit and atmosphere pervading the Jaina versions, the following points are easily noted : Omission of the typically Brahmanical episodes like the legends of Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra, Agastya, etc. ; addition of anti-Brahmanical legends pertaining to the origin of sacrifice and Rāvaṇa's destruction of Marutta's sacrifice ; addition of episodes implying devotion to and veneration for Jaina religion ; interspersing the narrative with sermons of Jain ; depicting numerous characters as devout Jainas as renouncing the world and becoming Jaina monks, as worshipping Jaina shrines and holy places ; describing past and future births of the characters wherein functioning of the law of Karman is given Jainistic prominence ; the emphasis throughout on the doctrine of *ahiṁsā*—all these create a characteristically Jain atmosphere.

In concluding, it may be observed that the differences found in the Jain versions have besides the patent doctrinal motivations, the same significance as those found in the Vedic-Brahmanic versions. If a legend or narrative has to preserve its living and inspiring appeal and influence over centuries, it has to be dynamic and responsive to the changes in the ideals, tastes, norms of behaviour, modes and traditions of the people. Most of the numerous significant developments in the Rāma narrative throughout more than two thousand years of its existence would find adequate explanation in the sociological, religious, cultural and ethical changes extending over the period. '*

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* This paper mainly presents relevant points and information from my two earlier papers, *viz.* (1) ' Caturmukha, one of the earliest Apabhraṁśa epic poets. ' Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda, 7, 3, 214-224, March 1958. (2) ' The narrative of Rāma in the Jaina Tradition ', Rāmāyaṇa Samīkṣā. 1967, 1-12. Requisite references and bibiliography are given in those papers. The last two paragraphs in the present paper are reproduced from No. 2.

HINDI VERSIONS OF THE RĀMĀYAṆA

B. D. TIWARI

1. Introduction

1.1. *Importance of Rāmāyaṇa in India and Indo-European countries :*

It is true that 'no work of world literature, secular in its origin, has ever produced so profound an influence on the life and thought of a people, as the *Rāmāyaṇa.*"[1] In fact the *Rāmāyaṇa,* the great Sanskrit epic of ancient India, commands an Alexandrian personality in the literary and cultural history of the major portion of the human race, residing in India and in a number of other Indo-European countries. History reports that Alexander, the Great, had established the record of the victory of his mighty sword, for a short time, from Greece to the borders of India, but the *Rāmāyaṇa* by capturing the human heart, mind and soul, established a record of its victory for more than 2,000 years over life, literature, philosophy, art, religion and culture in India, Nepal, Burma, Ceylon, Tibet, and in South-East Asian countries such as Jawa, Sumatra, Bornio, Indonesia and Cambodia, etc. During all these years, the *Rāmāyaṇa* has been told and retold, constantly by a number of poets, dramatists and authors, in Sanskrit, Prākrit, Apabhramsa and in all other Indian and South-east Asian languages. It also set its foot-prints in Urdu, Persian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and English Literature too.[2]

This immense popularity and the dominating influencing capacity of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in my humble opinion, largely depends upon the simplicity, utility, flexibility and the scope of expression of intrinsic values of human life, incorporated in the basic plot of the *Rāmāyaṇa,* wherein we find the life-story of Rāma and Sītā with all its glory and magnanimity.

1 : 2. *Rāmāyaṇa in Indian context* :

In Indian context, the *Rāmāyaṇa* had been a source of perpetual inspiration to the creative genius and the religious life of the people of India. That is why, we find a series of indelible impressions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* on the creative literature, religious outlook and the philosophy of life of the Vaishṇavas, the Jains, the Buddhas and the worshippers of the Ādya Sakti (the Energy Quanta) in India. The numerous versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, practically in all the regional languages of India from Kāshmir to Kanyākumārī and from Gujarat to Assam, prove that the *Rāmāyaṇa* has really been a part of the life and blood of Indian civilization and culture. The influence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* on Indian music, painting, dance, drama and sculpture, also supports the above conclusion.

The Persian translation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* by Faizy and Badāyunī, the existence of the *Rāmāyaṇa Khustar*, the *Rāmāyaṇa Manzoom* and the *Rāmāyaṇa Bahār* in Urdu and the availability of the *Masīhī Rāmāyaṇa* bear an eloquent testimony to the fact that the *Rāmāyaṇa* has the power to claim love and affection not only of the Vaishṇavas, the Jains, the Buddhas and the Shāktas, but had also procured love and affection of the Mohammadans and the Christians.

2. Hindi versions of the Ramayana

Hindi, the National Language of India, is rich enough to retain the literary and cultural heritage of this country. So far as the versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are concerned, no language in the world can equal Hindi. With due respects, I may be permitted to submit that there are more than 350 versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and its offshoots in Hindi, spread in the form of manuscripts throughout the Hindi speaking areas of India. These versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, can broadly be classified into the following 15 categories :—

2. 1. *Translation* :

The glory and popularity of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* inspired Kesarīsing, Vishṇudās, Santoshasing, Chhatradhāri, Īshwarī Prasād and Maheshdatta to translate it from Sanskrit into Hindi, while poets like Somanāth, Mathurādās, Shrikrishna Bhatta ' Kavi Kalānidhi ', Gaṇesh and Padmākar translated only a few parts of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, from time to time.

Gokulnāth Bhatta, Kishorīdas Mahant, Gulābsing, Umādatta Tripāṭhī, Mādhavadās and Navalsing Pradhān translated the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* from Sanskrit into Hindi.

The *Vichitra Rāmāyaṇa* of Dāmodar Mishra was translated by Baldeodās Jouharī and Hradayarām—' Rāmakavi ', translated the *Hanumannāṭaka* under the title ' *Hanumat Nāṭaka.*'

Khushālchand Jain translated the Jain *Padma Purāṇa* and *Uttar Purāṇa* Daulatrām translated the *Padma Purāṇa* and Indrajeet and Deodatta Kavi translated the Jain *Uttar Purāṇa* independently into Hindi.

Some of these translators gave new titles to their translations, e.g. the partial translations of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* were called the *Rāmvilās Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Rāmcharit Ratnākar* and the *Rāma Rasāyan Rāmāyaṇa* respectively by Ishwarī Prasad, Somnāth and Padmākar. Gokulnātha Bhatta called his translation as ' *Sītā Rāma Guṇārṇava Rāmāyaṇa Sapta Kānd.*'[3]

This is how, the Hindi versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of the Vaishṇāva and the Jain traditions have directly come into existence through the process of translation. It was one of the general tendencies of these translators to be true to the original text and they tried their best to retain fluency, literary beauty and consistency of effect in their translations, but for want of real poetic genius, none of these translations could come up to the high standard of the original text.

2. 2. *Literary versions of the Rāmāyaṇa* :

The nobility and magnanimity of Rāma's character and the conjugal devotion and fidelity of Sītā, have far reaching effect on the view-point of life of the Hindi speaking people of India. The result is that a number of poets have produced a series of complete or partial or abridged editions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Hindi.

2. 2. 1. *Complete Rāmāyaṇas* :

As Vālmīki and his *Rāmāyaṇa* influenced the entire trend of epics and dramas on the Rāma-legend in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsa and Hindi, so also Tulsīdās and his Rāmcharitmānas—the most outstanding religio-philosophic, literary epic of Hindi—

inspired more than 50 poets in Hindi,[4] to write various *Rāmāyaṇas*, under different titles such as *Rāmcharitra*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Rāmcharitra Rāmāyaṇa*, *Rāmageetā*, *Rāmakathā Kalpadruma*, *Rāmāyaṇa Mālā*, *Rāma-Vaibhava*, *Rāmārṇava*, *Ādi Rāmāyaṇa*, alias *Mādhava Madhura Rāmāyaṇa*, etc., etc.

Nawalsing Pradhān and Lalitā Prasād wrote *Ālha Rāmāyaṇa* and *Ālha Khand Rāmāyaṇa* respectively in the style of the popular Kanauji and Bundelkhandi Ballad—*Ālha Khand*, supposed to have been written by Jagnik, a warrior poet in the court of King Parmardidao of Bundelkhand.

Mādhavadās Chāraṇa and Khumān, 'Mān Kavi', composed *Rām Rāso* and *Rāmchandraju Ro Rāso* in accordance with the tradition of the heroic Rāsoes in Rājasthāni.

The other versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, such as the *Chhappaya Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Rāmāyaṇa Kakaharā*, the *Chhandāwalī Rāmāyaṇa*, etc., are the narrative descriptions of the Rāma legend of *Rāmāyaṇa* in various metres.

Sūrdās, the disciple of Vallabhāchārya, and the most outstanding poet of the Krishṇa Bhakti Cult in Hindi Literature, wrote *Sūr-Rāmāyaṇa* in lyrical form. A poet—Rāmapriyāsharaṇa, wrote *Sītāyana*, to glorify the character of Sītā, and made a conscious effort to retain Sītā, as the central character, dominating the entire Rāma legend in *Sītāyana*.

These *Rāmāyaṇas* have a grand variety of descriptions and metres, but none has the ability to equal the *Rāmacharitmānas* of Tulsīdās. Even the *Rāmchandrikā* of Keshavadās[5] does not stand in comparison with the literary glory and popularity of *Rāmcharitmānas*. To a certain extent, the dialogues of Keshavadās are somewhat better than those of Tulsīdās, but on account of excessive love for figurative embellishment and the lopsided development of the plot, the *Rāmachandrikā* of Keshavadās lost all its balance and dignity befitting the grandeur of a great epic.

Many a work referred to above, is lying in the form of manuscripts and awaits publication.

2. 2. 2. *Partial versions of the Rāmāyaṇa* :

Shri Maithilīsharana Gupta, one of the praise-worthy Hindi-poets of the Vaishnava faith, had written in *Sāket*, that—

> Rāma tumhārā vratta swayam hī Kāvya hai.
> Koī kavi ban jāya sahaja sambhāvya hai.[6]

It means that the legend of Rāma is poetry in itself. Whosoever wishes to write about it, can easily become a poet. This couplet is fully applicable to the partial narrations of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Hindi. More than 70 poets have composed poetry in Hindi to describe one or the other incident from the Rāma legend. These partial narrations are related to the birth of Rāma, songs in praise and pleasure of the birth of Rāma, various ceremonies at the time of the birth of Rāma, wrestling, hunting, and riding on horse by Rāma, the day-to-day life and activities of Rāma, Sītā-swayambar and the Shiva's bow, dialogue between Rāma and Parashurām, marriage of Rāma and Sītā, the breakfast and the dinner at the time of the marriage of Rāma and Sītā, the decoration of Mithilā, preparation for Rāma's coronation and his exile, the meeting of Bharata and Rāma at Chitrakoota, Rāma's visit to the cottage of Shabrī, abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa, the incidents of the Kishkindhā Kānd and the Sunder Kānd, Rāma's rescue expedition to Lanka; dialogue between Angada and Rāvaṇa, Mandodarī's efforts to persuade Rāvaṇa to send back Sītā to Rāma and to avoid war, Rāvaṇa's death, Rāma's return to Ayodhyā, Rāma's coronation, Sītā's exile, the horse sacrifice, the heroic war of Lava and Kusha with the army of Ayodhyā and Rāma's death.[7]

This series of partial narrations of the incidents of the *Rāmāyaṇa* collectively gives a wonderful effect of variations of metres, styles, expressions and imaginations of the poets concerned.

2. 2. 3. *Abridged versions of the Rāmāyaṇa* :

Indian scholars are really ingenious. They can write a commentary on a single word, with all its elaborations, explanations and expansion of ideas to such an extent that the commentary can take the shape of a monumental volume. Similarly they are competent enough to condense the ocean into a single drop of water. They can summarise an epic into a sloka, e.g. the Sanskrit scholars have abridged the complete *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* from an epic to a single sloka, and that is how '*Eka shloki Rāmāyaṇa*' (*Rāmayaṇa* in one stanza) has come into existence.

In accordance with the above tendency, the poet Duniyapati prepared an abridged edition of *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*. Haridās summarised the *Rāmcharit mānas* of Tulsīdās, Darshanlāl compiled a small version of the preachings of the *Rāmcharit mānas* and poets like Haricharan dās, Haribakshasing, Navalsing Pradhān and Mahārājā Jayasingjūdeo wrote abridged versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in general.[8]

The *Rāmcharitmānas* of Tulsīdās is available in the smallest possible abridged edition in the folk literature of Hindi, and that too in a single choupai i.e. chatushpadi. It is like this—

> Bāne bākī triyā churāī. Bāne bāse karī larāī.
> Eka Rāma, Eka Rāvaṇṇā. Tulsī ne racha dao pothannā.

'He abducted his wife and he fought with him. One was Rāma and the other was Rāvaṇa. For such an incident, Tulsīdās wrote a monumental volume'. This tendency of abridgement is parallel to the tendency of writing sūtras in a nut-shell.

2. 3. *Metrical versions of the Rāmāyaṇa* :

Rāma, being an incarnation of Vishnu, is worshipped as God, by the Rāmopāsaka Vaishnavas. Nearly 45 poets,[9] have expressed their devotional feelings of meditation, prayer and appreciation of Rāma in the popular metres in Hindi. They have written Kakaharās, Bārahakhadī, Ashtaka (8 verses), Tainteesi (33 verses) and even Shatakas (100 verses) in metres like Kabitta/Ghanāksharī, Chhappaya, Dohā, Kundaliyā, etc.

These devotional verses contain rhythmical tune and poetic embellishments with fluency of language and emotions, and their main object is to pray to Rāma and to invite his mercy for salvation of the devotee from wordly sufferings.

2. 4. *Lyrical versions of the Rāmāyaṇa* :

Gītāwali, *Rāgamālā*, *Rāmagītamālā*, *Pada Rāmāyaṇa*, *Padāwali Rāmāyaṇa*, *Barwai Rāmāyaṇa* and *Pādawalī Rāmacharit Sāt Kānd*, are some of the versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in lyrical form, wherein the poets have written songs on various aspects of the Rāma legend and have tried to interpret the complete *Rāmāyaṇa*, as far as possible, in musical Rāgas and Rāginīs.

The other set of poets described the Sītāswayambar, the marriage of Rāma and Sītā, and the story of Rāvaṇa in lyrical form.

The third group of the poets wrote the devotional songs and prayers in praise of Rāma and Sītā.

All these devotional songs[10] are directly related to Rāma Bhakti and Indian music. The people remember these songs by heart and hundreds of families read, sing and listen to these songs with devotional sentiments.

2. 5. *Symbolic Rāmāyaṇa* :

The Vishrām Mānasa[11] by Bābā Raghunāth dās is one of the symbolic *Rāmāyaṇas* in Hindi, wherein it is said that our body is *Rāmāyaṇa*, the self is Rāma and Kāma-krodhādi (lust, anger etc.) are Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa and other demons.

This is an attempt to give a metaphoric intrepretation to the *Rāmāyaṇa* with special reference to life and human psychology. This type of symbolism is available in *Ghata Rāmāyaṇa* of Tulsī Saheb or in *Deha Rāmāyaṇa*, the third canto of *Vilākha Kānd* of *Ānand Rāmāyaṇa.*

2. 6. *Dramatic versions of the Rāmāyaṇa* :

As there is a long tradition of Sanskrit dramas like the *Bāla Rāmāyaṇa* (Rājshekhara), the *Pratimā* and the *Abhisheka* (Bhāsa), the *Mahāvīr Charit* and the *Uttar Rāmcharit* (Bhavabhūti), the *Anargha Rāghava* (Murāri), the *Prasanna Rāghava* (Jayadev) etc. based on the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, similarly there is a series of dramas in Hindi, mainly based on the *Rāmcharitmānas* of Tulsīdās. The *Ānanda Raghunandana Nāṭaka*, the *Rāmāyaṇa Nāṭaka*, the *Rāmāyaṇa Mahānāṭaka*, the *Rāmleelā Nātaka*, the *Jānakī Rāmcharitra Nātaka*, the *Rāma Karuṇā Nātaka*, the *Raghunātha Nātaka* and the *Hanumāna Nātaka*[12] are some of the noteworthy dramas of this type. Except a little use of commentaries in prose in the *Ānanda*

Raghunandana Nātaka and in the *Jānakī Rāmcharitra Nātaka*, all other dramas are written in poetry-form, therefore they appear to be the *Rāmāyaṇas* in the form of poetic dramas. For want of dramatic art and stage awareness, these poetic dramas failed to procure stage popularity.

In comparison to the above dramas, the Rāmaleela, sponsored by Tulsīdās, the writer of the *Rāmcharitmānas*, was more popular in the public life of the Hindi speaking regions of India. It was staged like a folk drama and the verses of the *Rāmcharitmānas* were frequently used as dramatic dialogues and narration of incidents. The religious minded audience used to witness the poignant incidents and scenes of the Rāmaleelā with all thrill, suspense and devotion.[13]

Some of the dramatic companies used to stage dramas like Sītā-swayambar, Bharat Milāp, Sītā Haraṇa, Ahalyoddhār, the Rāma Rājya etc., from village to village, but these popular dramas were devoid of literary grandeur.

2. 7. *Commentaries on Rāmāyaṇa* :

Only a few Hindi poets have tried to write commentaries on the *Bāl-Kānd* of *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Rāmāshwamedha*, and the *Hanumannāṭaka*, but the deep interest of the Hindi speaking people in the *Rāmcharit-mānasa* of Tulsīdās provoked the poets to write commentaries on its *Ayodhyā Kānd*, *Kishkindhā Kānd*, *Sundar Kānd* and *Lankā Kānd* etc., separately. Poets like Rāmcharandās and Haricharandās etc., wrote commentaries on the entire *Rāmcharitmānas*. The *Ramāyaṇa Parichaya* contains explanations of the difficult Choupaies of the *Rāmcharitmānas*, while the *Shankāvalī Rāmāyaṇa* refers to the explanations and commentaries pertaining to the difficult portions of the *Rāmcharitmānas*. There are commentaries on the *Hanumān Bāhuk* of Tulsīdās and the *Rāmchandrikā* of Keshavadās too.[14]

Most of these commentaries are explanatory in nature.

2. 8. *Importance of the Rāmāyaṇa* :—

The *Rāmāyaṇa* has been a national possession of India for more than 2000 years. As the time passed and the generations changed, it acquired worldwide appreciation, recognition and popularity. The reason of this international repute of *Rāmāyaṇa* is based on its propagation of an ideal for individual, social, political and cultural values of human life. It teaches religion, ethics and morality. It serves as a source of inspiration for creative art. It inspires one and all to lead a noble life. Psychologically it directs our emotions, sentiments, thoughts and actions in such a way, that each one of us should try to be a 'Rāma', and not a 'Rāvaṇa'. The political ideology of Rāma Rājya, is a dream of the whole human race, for which all politicians are striving hard. Besides this, the *Rāmāyāṇa* holds a very high religious and spiritual significance. It is a Holy Book of the Hindus, as the *Holy Bible* is of the Christians or the *Quran* of the Muslims. Its reading and recitation is a part of the devotional life of the Hindus. The *Rāmāyaṇa* leads the devotees to Rāma, and Rāma—the most merciful, leads the devotees to salvation.

This spiritual and religious importance of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is elaborated by Gopāl Dwij, Bhagwatdās, Shītaldās, Bihārī Rāmaṇesh or Rāmaṇa Bihārī and Shāktadhar etc. Shri Gangādās, a follower of Tulsīdas, wrote *Rāmāyaṇa Māhātmya aur Tulsīcharit*, wherein he has emphasized not only the importance of the *Rāmcharitmānas*, but has also written a brief biography of Tulsīdās.[15]

2. 9. *The Rasik Sampradāya and Mysticism* :

The monogamous character of Rāma has been distorted by the poets of the Rasik Sampradāya in Hindi. Traditionally, Rāma, on account of his very high moral character, is held in high esteem, but under the influence of the Krishṇa Kāvya and especially under the popular poetic and dramatic descriptions of the love affairs and love-play of Rādhā-Krishṇa and the Gopis, the poets of the Rasik Sampradāya[16] depicted the character of Rāma as an incarnation of love, lust and beauty.

In Hindi, a large number of the devotees of the Rasik Sampradāya[17] described the beauty of Rāma and Sītā, and gave an account of their day to day luxurious life full of love and lust. They gave to the loveplay of Rāma and Sīta—a mystic touch. This attitude of giving a mystic interpretation to love and lust of Rāma and Sītā, at spiritual level, resembles the Madhuropāsanā of the Krishṇopāsaka cults, and approximates the mystical doctrines of the Mahāyān Cult, the Yuganaddha and the Neel-pat-darshan, etc. This cult did not flourish much in Hindi, in modern times.

2. 10. *The Shākta Versions of the Rāmāyaṇa :*

In the Vaishṇava, Jain and Bauddha versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the glorified personality of Rāma, is so dominating that inspite of Sītā, being the better half of Rāma, gets eclipsed, but the composition of the *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* in Sanskrit, brought about a radical change in this outlook.

In *Balmīki Rāmāyaṇa* and in all other *Rāmāyaṇas* of the Vaishṇava cult, Rama kills Dashānana, i.e. Rāvaṇa with ten heads, but in the *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa*[18], Sītā, the incarnation of the Ādyā Shakti, kills Sahasra Sheersha Rāvaṇa i.e., Rāvaṇa with a thousand heads. After Rāma's coronation in Ayodhyā and before Sitā's exile, Rāma attacks Sahasrasheersha Rāvaṇa to kill him, but Rāma fails on the battle field. He requests Sītā, to save him from the Sahasrasheersha Rāvaṇa, and on his request, Sītā, the Ādya Shakti, converts herself into the form of the Divine Mother Goddess, and countless Shaktis evolve out of each and every particle of her body.

Sītā the Energy Quanta, kills the Sahasrasheersha Rāvaṇa and the other Shaktis evolved out of her body kill the entire army of Sahasrasheersha Rāvaṇa. When the Sahasrasheersha Rāvaṇa died, the energy of his life left his body and got mixed with the grand personality of Sītā, the Energy Quanta. The sight of the war between the Shaktis and Sahasrasheersha Rāvaṇa and his army was horribile. Sītā was wild with anger and her form was so furious and terrible, that all heavenly gods, started feeling that the entire universe would be destroyed by the Energy Quanta, therefore, under the leadership of Rāma, they prayed to Sītā to be merciful and calm. Sītā granted their request and assumed her original form.

There are imprints of the Devī Sūkta,[19] the Durgā Saptashatī[20], the Devī Bhāgwat Purāṇa[21] and a number of Purāṇas and the Shakta Tantras on the *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* in Sanskrit.

According to the Shākta Tantra, 'Shaktā vinā pare Shive nāmadhāma na vidyate.'[22]—Shiva has no significance without Shakti. In other words the 'powerful' has no meaning without the 'power'. The Tantra Mahāvignāna says that' Shivāsyābhyantare Shakti, Shaktaramyantare Shive. Anantaram naiva Jānīyāt, chandra-chandrikāyoriva.'[23], there is no difference between Shiva and Shakti. In fact Shakti exists in Shiva and Shiva survives and acts in Shakti. This is how, there is adwait (oneness) in the two. Sītā is Shakti and Rāma is Shaktimān, but Sītā, being Shakti, is superior to Rāma—This fact is emphasized in the original *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* in Sanskrit and in all other *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇas* in Hindi.

I have come across a series of manuscripts of such *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇas* in Hindi, written by Mathurādās, Siyārām, Prasiddha, Shivaprasād, Bhavānilāl, Ānand, Rāmjī Bhatta, Navalsing Pradhān, Sūrya Kumar, Gokuldās Kāyastha, Lālā Lālmani, Baldeo Shrīvāstava, Laxmandās, Bahoran Dwij and Roopsāhi, etc.[24]

Out of the above texts, the *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* by Laxmandās is the translation of the Sanskrit *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa*, said to have been written by Balmīki. In fact Balmīki is not the original writer of the aforesaid *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* in Sanskrit. It is a creation of some one else in the name of Balmīki. Roopsāhi, while writing the *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* tried to imitate the metrical style of *Rāmcharitmānas* of Tulsīdās. The title of the manuscripts of the *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇas* by Sūrya Kumār and Siyārāma, is *Jānāki Vijaya*. Prasiddha named it as *Jānakī Vijaya Rāmāyaṇa* and Gokuldās called his *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* as '*Shakti Prabhākar*'. Thus there is a tradition of *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇas* in Hindi since the last four hundred years.

'Rāma Kī Shakti Poojā' by 'Nirālā' is one of the recent additions to the above trend.

Here, I am reminded of the Tantrika's concept, 'Gopanīyam, Gopanīyam, Gopaniyam prayatnatah Twayāchi gopitavyam hi na deya yasya kasyachit'[25] Keep your secrets to yourself only. Leave no stone unturned to retain their secrecy. Never leak them out to a layman. This statement is true not only in the case of the Tāntrika Literatue and its experimental methods, but is also applicable to the *Shākta Rāmāyaṇa* in Hindi.

The *Shākta Rāmāyaṇas* need an intensive and exhaustive research.

2.11. *The Rāmāyaṇa and the folk literature* :

Rāma, the Rāma-legend and the *Rāmāyaṇa* are so close to the heart, mind and soul of the Hindi speaking people that they have been influencing their entire life since the last hundreds of years.

2.11.1. *Folk songs on the Rāmāyaṇa* :

At the time of the birth of a child, ladies sing the Songs of the birth of Rāma, e.g. "Janama laye Shrī Rāma, Ajuddyājī men Janama laye. "...." Rāma is born. He has taken his birth in Ayodhyā ...."

After the marriage, the bridegroom and his bride are welcomed with the songs of the marriage of Rāma and Sītā, e.g. 'Bihāya Lāye Raghubar, Ho Jānaki Khon...'—Rāma married Sītā and has brought her home, and at the time of the death of a man, the people say, ' Rāma nām satya hai '—The name of Rāma is the ultimate truth.

The birth, the marriage and the death are the three important events in human life, and on all these three events, Rāma and the incidents of the *Rāmāyaṇa* occupy a significant place.

We find a number of beautiful folk songs in Hindi, related to the characters and the incidents of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, e.g. there is a folk song, which narrates Kaushalyā's pathetic feelings after the departure of Rāma, Sītā and Laxmaṇa from Ayodhyā. She says—

' Āja mohe Raghubar kī sudhi āyī.
Rāma binā morī Sūnī Āyodhyā, Lachhaman bin thakurāī.
Sītā binā morī sūnī rasoī, kaun karai chaturāī.
Āja mohe Raghubar kī sudhi āyī...'

Today, I remember Rāma very acutely. In his absence, Ayodhyā has become deserted. The Royal authority has lost all its charm without Laxmaṇa and the kitchen is desolute in the absence of Sītā. Now, who will show her skill in cooking?

Folk songs like these are too natural and effective. Such folk songs possess spontaneous overflow of delicate feelings, of sorrows and sufferings of human heart. They need a thorough investigation, compilation and publication for further studies and research.

2.11.2. *Puzzles, based on the Rāmāyaṇa* :

I have come across a puzzle in the folk literature of Hindi based on the characters of the *Rāmāyaṇa* e.g.

'Shyāma barana ujjwal mukha kaise?'
'Rāvāṇa seesa Mandodarī Jaise.'
'Pawan-pūta kar laihon.'
'Rāma-pitā kar daihon.'

The interpretation of this conversational puzzle is as under:

A customer went to a grain shop and asked the dealer—At what rate, he would give the seeds of the pulse, which are black in colour with a white face. (He was asking for Uḍada—phaseolus Radiatus, which are black in colour with a white spot.)

The dealer said—You may have them at the rate of the total heads of Rāvāṇa and Mandodarī, per rupee. (Rāvāṇa had ten heads and Mandodarī had one. That is, he would sell the Uḍada at eleven seers a rupee.)

The customer said—I will purchase them after winnowing. Here, there is a pun on the word 'Pawanpūta'. In the ordinary way, the word 'Pawanpūta', means Hanumān, the son of the God of wind (Pawana), but in the puzzle, the word 'Pawan-pūta' has altogether a different meaning. It means that the customer would like to purchase the Uḍada in a clean form after having been winnowed. Thus the second meaning of the word 'pawanpūta' is cleaned by winnowing.

The dealer said—In that case, you will have them at the rate of Rāma's father, Dasharatha, i.e. at the rate of 'Dasa=ten'seers, a rupee.

In this way, in the above puzzle, the numerical figure ' ELEVEN ' is indicated by the total of the heads of Rāvaṇa and Mandodarī. The figure ' TEN ' is suggested on the basis of the name of Rāma's father—Dasharatha, and the term ' Pawan-pūta ' is applied for removing husks and chaff from the Uḍada by winnowing.

There is one more astrological puzzle in Hindi, which is based on the Rāmāyaṇa, e.g.

> ' Tul-tul karate ootaka-nātaka, Sinha rahā samujhāī.
> Kumbha ke kāraṇa bhaī larāī, boojho mere bhāī. '

The two ' Tuls ' were fighting and the lion was advising one of them not to fight. The fight was for a pot. Dear brother ! think over this puzzle and explain its meaning.

The astrological explanation of the puzzle is like this—

The two persons, Rāma, and Rāvaṇa, whose zodiac sign was ' TULA '—Libra (the Balance) were fighting for Sītā, whose zodiac sign was ' KUMBHA '—Aquarius (the Water Carrier) and Mandodarī, whose zodiac sign was ' SINHA '—the Leo (Lion) was trying to persuade Rāvaṇa not to fight but to send Sītā back to Rāma.

There are many more things like this in the folk literature of Hindi.

2.12. *The Rāmāyaṇa and fore-telling* :

The North Indians consult the ' *Rāmashalākā Prashnāwalī* '[26], consisting of the choupaies of the *Rāmcharitmānasa*, as a basis for fore-telling of the coming events, and they have full faith and confidence in it from generation to generation.

2.13. *Historical chronology in the Rāmāyaṇa* :

A book, called ' *Rāmāyaṇa kī Ghatnāon Kā Tithikrama* [27]', by Shri Mohanlāl Samādhiya, gives an account of the historical chronology of incidents of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

2.14. *Indexes of the Rāmāyaṇa* :

The *Rāmāyaṇa Sūchanikā* by Shri Krishṇa Bhatta ' Kavi Kalānidhi ' and the *Ramāyaṇa Suchanika/Kakorā Rāmāyaṇa*[28] by Rasika

Govind, contain the indexes of the *Ramāyaṇa* for reference. These *Rāmāyaṇas* can be compared to the *Kāl Nirṇaya Rāmāyaṇa*; *Agnivesha Rāmāyaṇa*, *Samayādarsha Rāmāyaṇa* or *Samaya Nirūpaṇa Rāmāyaṇa* and *Abda Rāmāyana.*

2.15. *Offshoots of the Rāmāyaṇa :*

Rāma, Laxmaṇa, Sītā, Koushalyā and Hanumān are some of the popular characters of the Rāmāyaṇa, who inspired more than 75 poets[29] to write on one or the other aspect of their lives. The writings of these poets have a variety of subject matter, metres and devotional concepts.

A few poets described the Nakha-Shikha of Rāma, Sītā, and Hanumān, while the others wrote the stotras and verses on meditation of Rāma and Hanumān. Some poets simply composed prayers and decribed the characters of Rāma, Sītā and Hanumān. A few poets narrated the incidents of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Dohās, Kabittas, Songs and the Bārahamāsās.

A majority of the poets wrote a large number of books with numerical titles. e.g. the Panchaka (5 verses : The *Hanumāna Panchaka*), Ashtaka (8 verses : The *Ramāshataka*, The *Sitā Ashtaka*, the *Hanumāna Ashtaka*), Pacchīsī (25 verses: The *Hanumata Pacchisi*), Chalīsā or the Chālīsī (40 verses : The *Hanumāna-Chālisā*, the *Bajarangi Chālisi*), The Panchāsā (50 verses : *Hanumata Pachāsā*), Sāthika (60 verses : The *Hanumāna Sāthika*), The Shataka (100 verses : The *Chitrakoota Shataka*, the *Rāmāyaṇa Shataka*, The *Laxmana Shataka*), The Ashtottar Shata (108 verses : The *Hanumāna Ashtottara Shata*), and the Sahasranāma (1000 names : The *Jānaki Sahasranāma*), etc.

The nobility of Sītā's character, the bravery of Laxmaṇa, Koushalyā's love for Rāma, Sītā and Laxmaṇa and the heroic deeds of Hanumāna have been highly praised by these poets, in various ways, in various contexts.

In the Vaishṇava tradition, Rāma is considered God—the parama Brahma, but Tulsīdās, by writing the *Hanumāna Bāhuka*, gave Hanumān, the position of a demi-god, who can rescue a devotee from physical sufferings, therefore, at a later stage, a large number of the poets of the Vaishṇava cult, wrote songs and verses on Hanumān. They spoke too highly about his bravery and capacity to save the devotees from the physical and natural calamities. They eulogized not only his prowess but also gave him a Tāntrika significance through works like the *Mahāvir Kavacha* or the *Hanumānji Kā Kavacha*, etc.

These offshoots of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, gave separate importance to the secondary characters such as Laxmaṇa, Hanumāna, Koushalyā etc. The stotras of Rāma, Sītā and Hanumān provided the material to the devotees for Rāma-Bhakti, Sītā-Bhakti and Hanumān-Bhakti. Thousands of the worshippers of Hanumān recite the *Hanumāna Chālīsā* by heart. It is worth noting that the *Mahavīr Kavacha* and the *Rāma Raksha Kavacha*, etc. linked the characters of the *Rāmāyaṇa* with the Tantra and the Tāntrika-literature.

3. Some published versions of the Ramayanas

The *Rāmacharitamānasa* of *Tulsidās* is the most outstanding '*Rāmāyāṇa*' in Hindi. The *Rāmachandrikā* of Keshavadās, the *Vaidaihī Banwās* of Ayodhyāsing Upādhyāya 'Hariaudha', the '*Sāketa* of Shri Maithili-sharaṇa Gupta are some of the published literary versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Hindi. The *Rāma vilasa Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Rāmāyaṇa Sapta Kānda*, the *Tithi Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Ālhā Rāmāyaṇa*, *Adbhutottara Kānda* and the *Sār Ramayaṇa*[30] are some of the other published *Ramāyaṇas* in Hindi. These publications have practically no bearing on the minds of the people.

As the *Balmiki Rāmāyaṇa* is the first and the foremost *Rāmayaṇa* in Sanskrit, similarly, *Rāmcharitamānasa* of Tulsīdās is the unique '*Rāmāyaṇa*' in Hindi. As far as the 'Rāma-Kāvya' is concerned, no work in Hindi literature equals it.

Nowadays, Rāmāyaṇas are being translated from one language to another. e.g. the *Rāmacharitamānas* of Tulsīdās is translated from Hindi into Marāṭhi[31] or say *Krittiwas Rāmāyaṇa* is translated from Bengali into Hindi[32]. This type of translation of the *Rāmāyaṇas* from one language to another[33] are necessary for our national integration and religious understanding.

Conclusion

On the basis of the facts, narrated above, it is evident that Hindi has got a very rich tradition of the *Ramayana*. It has influenced the life, literature, arts, ethics and the individual, social, political and cultural thought of the entire Hindi speaking population of India. Its various versions are devotion-oriented, and the devotees of Rāma see him in each and every aspect of human life. For them, Rāma and Sītā are all pervading. It is not only a story of Rāma and Rāvaṇa, or a tale of the consequences of the desire for wealth and woman, but it is a story of the good and the evil aspects of the human life. So long as there are 'Kaikeyis' and 'Ravāṇas' in the society, Rāma, the Rāma-legend and the Rāmāyaṇa will survive.

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[1] Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics—James Hastings, Vol. 10, Page-574
[2] *Rāmkathā*—Rev. Father Kāmil Bulke.
[3] Kindly see : Reference—(1) Manuscripts in Hindi, Page. No.1.
[4] *Ibid.*, Page 1 and 2.
[5] *Rāmchandrikā*—Keshavadās, Edited by Lālā Bhagwāndīn Vol I and II.
[6] *Sāket*—Shri Maithilīsharaṇa Gupta, Samvat, 2019, Page 1.
[7] Kindly see : Reference, (1) Manuscripts in Hindi, Pages 2-3.
[8] *Ibid.*, page. 5.
[9] *Ibid.*, Page 3-4.
[10] Kindly see : Reference (*a*) Manuscripts in Hindi, Page 4-5.
[11] *Ibid.*, Page 5.
[12] *Ibid.*, Page 5-6.
[13] Hindī Sāhitya Kosha—Editor : Dr. Dhīrendra Vermā, etc. Vol. I, Page 702-703.
[14] Kindly see : Reference (1) Manuscripts in Hindi, Page-5.
[15] *Ibid.*, Page 5.
[16] Rāmabhakti Men Rasika Sampradāya—Dr. Bhagwatīprasād Sing ; Rāmabhakti Men Madhura Upasana—Dr. Bhuwaneshwar Mishra 'Mādhava'.
[17] Kindly see : Reference (1) Manuscripts in Hindi, Page 6.
[18] See : *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* (Hindi Teeka)—Jwālaprasād Mishra.
[19] Devī Sūkta—Rāma Narāyana Daṭta Shāstrī.
[20] Durga Saptashatī (Saralābhidhan Bhāshā Teekā)—Rāmeshwar Bhatta.
[21] Shrimaddevī Bhāgwat (Pitāmbarā Bhāshā Teekā) Pandit Rāmtej Shāstrī.
[22] Tāntrika Vāngamaya Men Shākta Drāshti—Mahāmahopādhyāya, Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, Page 86.
[23] Tantra Mahāvignāna—Shrī Rām Sharmā, Vol. 1, Page 186.
[24] Kindly see : References (1) Manuscripts in Hindi, Pages 7-8.
[25] Tantra Mahāvignāna—Shrī Rāma Sharmā, Vol. I, Page 76.
[26] Kindly see : References (1) Manuscripts in Hindi, Page 6.
[27] *Ibid.*, Page 5.
[28] Kindly see : References (1) List of Manuscripts in Hindi, Page No. 5.
[29] *Ibid.*, Page 6-7.
[30] Kindly See : References (2) Printed Rāmāyaṇas in Hindi page 8.
[31] Shrī Rāmacharitamānasa (Marāthī) Shri Pragnānananda Saraswaṭi.
[32] Krithiwasa Rāmāyaṇa (Hindi) Shrī Nandakumar Awasthi.
[33] Kindly see : References (2) Printed Rāmāyaṇa in Hindi (6) Rāmāyaṇa translated into Hindi from other languages, pages 8-9.

THE RAMA STORY IN INDIAN FOLK LORE: SOME SIGNIFICANT INNOVATIONS

VIDYA NIVAS MISRA

RAMA is neither a legend nor a myth nor a symbol in Indian folk literature, he is the very breath of folk literature. Rama is not only human, he is just one amongst us, he is hardly different in his emotive needs and reactions. And yet he stands apart, not because he is the king of Ayodhya or he could kill Ravana, the great oppressor, not because he is an obedient son and a faithful husband. His distinctive feature is his participation in everyday human life. He permeates in every ritual. He is a companion in every pilgrimage, he bears the brunt of the everyday sorrow of every man and woman. Rama is an eternal presence and that makes him distinct from the Rama of epics and classical literature. No one can trace the chronology of Rama's theme in the Indian folk lore, yet it is undoubtedly a very ancient theme which inspired bards and popular singers even before the composition of the great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. In fact, Rama theme seems to have originated in folk lore as is evident from the first question put by Valmiki to Narada : who in this world is the person, who is endowed with manly qualities and whose life should be the proper theme for a poem.

(Konvasmin sāmpratam loke guṇavān kasca vīryavān)

The Indian folk lore is the substratum of our culture and retains some of the finest shades of aesthetic refinement.

I intend to focus in this paper those significant new episodes and motifs pertaining to the Rama story, which are not found in the literary tradition and even if one or two of them are, have not been depicted with the subtle sensibility which we find in folk lore. I have relied on a common lore found in some major regional traditions, such as Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Bagheli and Kannauji, in other words, traditions covering a population exceeding 120-130 millions of people. There are very little variations, we would say, negligible variations.

Before I discuss these innovations and improvisations made by the folk lore, I would like to point out the subgenre which depicts the Rama story. Rama is an integral part of the life cycle ritual songs, *viz.*, birth, tonsure, sacred thread, marriage and death. Songs related to the different activities in these rituals treat Rama as the body of the ritual act, it is Rama who is taking birth, it is Rama whose tonsure ceremony is going to take place, it is he who is going to wear the sacred thread, it is he who is the bridegroom and lastly the soul who has departed and cast a dark shadow by his death is Rama. This motif clearly signifies that the folk tradition has identified Rama with the person whose ritual is being performed. It is similar to the idea of deification of the sacrifice (Devo bhutva devam yajeta) before a sacrifice is performed. Rama is the personification of sacrament. A large number of the year-cycle songs depict the story of Rama starting with his birth in the first month of the year Chaitra (April) and bringing him back to Ayodhya after his conquest of Lanka to celebrate Holi in Phalguna (March). There are a few songs which begin with the summer and recycle the sequence of Rama's exile in the forest. This again depicts Rama as a cosmic process, as an eternal becoming. He breathes in every human activity of some significance and his life adventures concretise the changes in seasons. In other words, he is the life cycle and he is the cycle of seasons in the folk tradition. This naturally results in a peculiar transformation of Rama, he is shorn of his regal personality, his historical personality, his legendary personality or even his symbolic character, he is just an ordinary human being, he is living an ordinary life, but he is and in that respect alone he is different, because he is everywhere and eternally everywhere. In other words, the folk tradition has sublimated the ordinary evanescent human life to the status of a cosmic and eternal series of acts through the medium of Rama's life story. The Rama story is the bridge to go across the river of life from the shore of mortaltiy to the shore of immortality. The Rama story is also sung in action-songs such as songs sung along with grinding barley and wheat and in song relating to pilgrimage. Rama is a part of the collective consciousness, he shares all our joys and all our sorrows. which with his association no longer remain small. He is a ceaseless activity, he is an eternal journey of the soul. He is not fixed at one point, he is a flowing rhythm of life. So he joins in every festivity, he consoles in every sorrow.

Coming to the new improvisations in the Rama story, the first one is the motif of a deer being killed for the feast at the birth celebration of Rama. The rejoicings at child birth are invariably associated with a series of songs, all of them are surcharged with deep pathos. The folk tradition thereby intends to strike a balance between joy and sorrow in human life and to indicate that one should not forget the very nature of human joy, never unmingled with sorrow. One of these songs relates the story of the killing of the deer.

'A doe is standing under a full foliaged Palāśa tree. She is very sad. Her mate asks, 'What has happened to you ?' Has the pasture dried up and you did not get any water to drink and you are thirsty'. 'No, my dear, the pasture is green, the waters are there to drink, flee away for your life. Hunters are coming to kill you for the feast of Rama's birth.' 'My dear doe, you have lost your senses. If I am killed for that feast, I shall achieve emancipation from all sorrow, all death.' 'Oh hunter, do kill me but spare my mate'. 'Foolish doe, a doe's flesh is tasteless and insipid, go away, the deer cannot be spared.' 'Queen Kausalya, bestow on me a favour. Give back to me the skin of my deer so that I would console myself with his presence in his skin.' Foolish doe, go away, I shall have a hand-drum (Khanjri) made of that skin my child Rama would play with it.' Whenever that drum is played, the doe raises her ears to hear that sound and misses her mate.'

This poignant motif replaces the one used by Valmiki the motif of the killing of the male heron (Kraunca Vadha) and indicates two operations at the same time, a deer becomes the cause of Sītā's abduction because a deer had been killed for the feast given at Rama's birth ; and secondly the doe's curse falls on Kausalya who is deprived of her mate. This song carries the burden of sorrow of the doe and symbolically makes Rama to carry the guilt on his shoulders, when he exiles his doe, Sita, to forest. The doe of this song is innocence personified and the birth of a child has to invoke this spirit of innocence and deep faith.

The second innovation is the introduction of new ground for calling a *svayamvara* (a marriage test) for Sita. Sita goes to worship Siva. The temple was of course a hamlet of clay and Sita would clean and besmear the floor with cowdung. In the temple was the bow of Siva. Sita had to clean the ground underneath. So she lifted the bow with her left hand and cleaned the ground with her right. Janaka saw this performance of his daughter and decided that he alone could be a suitable husband to such a valorous daughter who could break the bow of Siva. This new theme adds a new dimension to the motif of Dhanur Bhanga (breaking of the bow). Sita can effortlessly lift the bow with her left hand. This shows that she is an embodiment of might, she is the height of power, she can be wedded by one who can be equally mighty and powerful and yet who could wield power without showing it. Rama alone is such a person. He wields power effortlessly.'

The episode of Sita's pre-marriage meeting with Rama is missing in Valmiki, but as developed in Tulsidas and other poets, it has been given a new colour. Sita goes to the orchard of her father comprised of just five trees. She meets Rama, who takes her in his arms. 'Leave my tender arms, Rama, what shall I say if my golden bangles are broken?' When she returns home and stands very upset at the door, her mother asks, Why you are so sad and upset, why are your eyes reddened?' Sita tells frankly 'Mother you may scold me, you may chastise me, you may drive me out of your house. I met Rama today in your orchard and Rama held me in his arms.' 'Daughter, I would not scold you, I would not chastise you, I would not exile you. Rama alone is the proper bridegroom for you. You will be married to him.'[2] This marriage song speaks of Sita's candour and makes Sita a woman of great determination. She is not only bodily powerful, she is very strong-willed. Both the pre-marriage episodes in folk tradition bring out a different perspective, where a woman can take a decision and be powerful and yet be so tender and so humble in her behaviour.

The third innovation is the motif of thorn. 'Sita dumped some dustbin and a grove of bamboos grew on the dump. King Dasaratha went out to cut some bamboo shafts and had his finger pricked by a thorn. He was dying with pain. Kaikeyi took out that thorn and eased his pain. The king asked her to ask for a reward. Kaikeyi said, "Let Bharata be crowned as prince and Rama be exiled to forest.'' The King cried out, "What a reward you have asked for, you have thrust a new shaft in my heart.'' In this episode the help rendered by Kaikeyi on a very ordinary common place occasion is different from the one related in the classical Rama story, that she rendered help when Dasaratha had his chariot wheel loosened. Kaikeyi in this episode acts as a reliever from physical pain caused by the pricking of a thorn, but ironically turns about to be a giver of mental pain which is a magnification of the pricking thorn. This motif brings an aesthetic appeal through projecting a dramatic irony to the episode of Kaikeyi being the instrument in Rama's exile. Kaikeyi is the illusion at the physical level which leads a man astray and then he cannot foresee that the temptations of the solace offered by such an illusion could result ultimately in his doom. This motif has another aspect, Dasaratha goes out to cut the bamboos grown on the dump made out of Sita's throwings, he symbolically goes out to cut off the offshoots of Sita's wild youthful dreams and has his finger pricked with a thorn. This thorn is a warning, why did you come along with Kaikeyi stealthily to have this bamboo grove felled, this bamboo grove is Sita's treasure. Dasaratha does not pay head to this warning of the thorn and falls into the snare of Kaikeyi's kindness. He has to pay dearly for it.

The fourth episode is not exactly an innovation but is a new treatment of Kausalya's lament for her exiled son. Kausalya is made to cry out in an action song sung at grinding time. 'Where would be my dear children Rama and Lakshmana. Rama who would never for a moment was out of my sight, has been exiled. My heart breaks as under. Why did I give my consent? Rama is the pupil of my eyes and Lakshmana my eyes, Sita is the ladle in my hand. How can I console myself? Rama left me at noon, Lakshmana left me at sunset and Sita at midnight. The rains have set in, the clouds have deepened the dark night, the thunders roar. Under what tree my children are being soaked with rain ? Oh Gods, do not pour rains in the woods which shelter my children. Rama's golden mantle will be soaked. The waist garment of Laksmana will be soaked and the entire toilet of my daughter Sita would be spoilt, if it rains. How to console myself ?'

This song is just an example as to how the regal characters of Rama's story has been transformed into that of the common folk. The image of Rama being pupil of the eyes, the dark shining part of the eye, the deep expression of the eye signifies that Rama is physically dark and mentally deep, he is the essence of light. Lakshmana is the eye, the open brightness of the eye, the movement of the eye, the agility of the mind and Sita is the ladle used in cooking, she is the entire household, she is the favour of all food, of all homely pleasure. Rama's leaving at midday indicates a scorching Sun, Lakshman's departure at sunset indicates a cessation of all activity and Sita's departure at midnight indicates the desolate darkness of a lonely mother. The innovation lies in the effective use of very subtle and yet transparent imagery.

The last two innovations pertain to the episode of Sita's banishment. The first deals with the underlying factor of banishment. It is not the fear of what people say with regards to the chastity of Sita, which becomes the instrument of her banishment. On the contrary it is the jealousy of Rama and the malice of Rama's sister which is responsible for Sita's banishment. 'Rama's sister asks Sita to draw the picture of Ravana because Sita was an accomplished artist. Sita is hesitant, lest Rama may get angry. Rama's sister implores her and swears by her father and her mothers and she would not tell anybody about this, Sita has drawn the feet, the hands and is just about to finish the heads of Ravana, when Rama appears and Sita covers the drawing with the fold of her sari. The malicious sister-in-law when serving meals backbites and Rama orders Lakshman to take Sita and leave her in a forest. Lakshman implores Rama not to do so, " Sita is food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, and clothes for the clotheless, how can you think ill of her ? " Lakshman takes her out, she gets thirsty and asks him to fetch water. Lakshman leaves her under a sandalwood tree and fetches water in small cups of Kadamba leaves. Sita out of sheer exhaustion has gone to sleep. Lakshman walks away with tears in his eyes. Sita wakes up and cries out, 'Oh, my brother-in-law, why did you not stay. I could have looked up you and filled you in my eyes. I could have cried out my grief.'

In another folk song 'Rama asks Lakshman to take him to the forest where Sita is dwelling. He meets Lava and Kush, ask them, who they are. They tell him, We are grandsons of Dasaratha and nephews of Lakshman ; Sita is our mother, we do not know who our father is' Rama goes to Sita and wants to beseach her to return to Ayodhya. Sita does not even look at him, the cruel one, who banished her when she was pregnant. She asks the mother Earth to split apart so that she may be taken in. The earth splits apart, Sita is taken in. Rama desparately catches the lump of her hair. But Sita is such an epitome of chastity that the lump is transformed into Kusa grass.' Sita here has been again depicted as a strong willed woman of virtue. She cannot forgive Rama, and the folk tradition is not willing to forgive Rama for this act. She is so strong willed that she does not even glance at Rama. She only requests her mother to save her from this shameful situation, the banisher asking the banished to return to a home from which she has been banished. The earth opens up. The motif of bunch of hair turning into Kuśa is very effective. Kuśa is a sharp-edged grass and cuts when touched. The smooth and glossy hair turning into sharp edged Kuśa is an indication of Sita's capacity to assume a role demanding hard decision, strong will and chastity. Kuśa grass is the sacred grass which is an essential article in every ritual. One cannot resolve without holding a Kuśa in one's hand. All that is left of Sita is her strong resolution, her sharp edge and her chastity.

In another song Sita sends a message to Ayodhya to give the tidings of birth of two sons with the direction that the tidings be given to all but Rama. Rama asks Lakshman, 'What tidings make your forehead gleam with joy?' Lakshman says 'My sister-in-law Sita has given birth to twins.' The toothbrush which Rama was holding falls down, the water in the pot spills and the eyes are brimmed with tears. Rama wipes them with his 'patta'. Vasistha goes out to the forest where Sita is dwelling and asks her to return to Ayodhya. Sita refuses, 'you are our preceptor. I would not disobey you, I shall take ten steps towards Ayodhya, but I shall not go to Ayodhya.' The earth opens up and Sita goes in.

Here, again, Sita's modesty is balanced by her strong determination and her unrelenting sense of dignity.

In short, the Indian folklore has innovated some episodes and motifs in the Rama story with a definite purpose. The purpose is primarily to bring out the dignity of the Indian woman in its full splendour through the character of Sita and secondarily to make out a lonely man of Rama, the great hero, so that he may become more human, more intimate and more a person belonging to ourselves ; so that Rama's loneliness is our loneliness, and our tragedy of wrong decisions is Rama's tragedy, it is the tragedy of the wilful Man, the valiant Man and of the faithful and loving husband. One must remember that the emotion generated by Rama's loneliness is an aesthetic enjoyment of a unique kind. The Indian mind sees a quietude in this lonelines, sees a rebirth in this tragedy because the forest sheltering Rama is transformed into a new existence. 'The dry and dead woods green and the fruitless trees begin bearing fruits, nectar-like fruits, birds gather to partake this nectar. The poets who have dried up are swollen with unfathomable water. The swans throng to drink at them. The barren lands where not a leave flutters and where no creature breathes turn fertile and birds from far fritter in that new pasture.'

Rama's exile is cherished for this property of austerity which is held very high in the Indian hierarchy of values and this property makes Rama a close and intimate companion for everybody everyday of life.

A FOLK PAINTED MANUSCRIPT OF THE RĀMACARITAMĀNASA

NIRANJAN GOSWAMI

THE *Rāmacaritamānasa*, is the largest and the most renowned poetical composition of Tulasīdāsa (Ca. A.D. 1543-1623),[1] one of the brightest luminaries in the firmament of mediaeval Indian poetry. It is also the greatest literary work of the Hindus in the sixteenth century and is still alive and meaningful to a large body of devotees in this country. Composed in the Avadhī dialect, the subject matter of the poem is supplied by the original Sanskrit epic, the Rāmāyaṇa by Vālmīki, and deals with the now well-known story of the life and deeds of Rāma including his birth and childhood, his forest exile, abduction of his wife Sītā by Rāvaṇa, the demon King of Laṅkā, and the conquest of demons and recovery of Sītā with the help of his brother Lakṣmaṇa and their army of monkeys and others. The story ends with the triumphant return of Rāma to his native Kingdom of Ayodhyā, his coronation, and the eventual establishment of his own ideal rule in the kingdom of Ayodhyā.[2] The *Rāmacaritamānasa*, however, is not to be regarded as a mere vernacular rendering of its Sanskrit source book. Apart from its lofty idealism, its simple exposition of ethical and moral dicta synthesising the principles of simple devotion with the metaphysics of religion, the work has aptly been recognised as a creative work of art by virtue of its remarkable literary qualities—the style and beauty of its poetry and its aesthetics.

An illustrated copy of this celebrated text is now in the collection of the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University, entered in the Accession Register of the Museum under No. T. 448. The set was collected by D. P. Ghosh, the Founder—Curator of the Museum, in 1942 from the custody of Ramdas Aulia, the then supervisory priest of the Vaiṣṇava monastery of Sadhakbag in Police Station Jiyaganj in the district of Murshidabad, West Bengal.[3] The manuscript is prepared on paper. Its oblong folios are 343 in number including the frontispiece which is unnumbered. Each folio measures 24.7 cm. × 30.5 cm. while the actual writing space outlined by coloured borders occupies an area of 17 cm. × 22.5 cm. only. The extant copy is in excellent state of preservation. However, a few leaves are missing and some folios (folio Nos. 226-253 belonging to the *Kiṣkindhā-*, *Sundara*, and *Laṅkā-Kāṇḍas*) which were apparently lost on some early occasion have been substituted for original ones at a later date.[4] Significantly, the writing on these pages is of inferior quality and further these do not contain any illustration. Except for these lacunae, the manuscript is virtually a complete set concluded in seven cantos of the *Bāla-*, *Ayodhyā-*, *Araṇya-*, *Kiṣkindhā-*, *Sundara-*, *Laṅkā-*, and *Uttara-Kāṇḍas.*

The set has the text in Avadhī. The textual matter is written on the plain surface of the paper, on both sides of the leaves in bold Nagari characters which are drawn with utmost care and confidence. The usual medium for writing is black ink, although at the end of each chapter red ink has also been used as supplementary to the black ink most probably with a view to underlining the significance of the information contained in the colophons regarding the scribe, the patron, and the progress of the work of preparation of the manuscript. A study of the text in consultation with an authoritative edition of the *Rāmacaritamānasa* reveals that it is a fairly faithful copy of the original composition barring the interpolation of a few episodes which are left out in Tulsīdāsa's classic.

Significantly the set has colophons at the conclusion of each chapter, although the surviving colophons occur at only four places at the end of the *Bāla-*, *Ayodhyā-*, *Araṇya-*, and *Laṅkā-Kāṇḍas*. Apart from dates, what emerges from a critical review of the data available from the colophons may be summarised as follows :

'Śrī Ichhārāma Miśra, a brāhmaṇa, wrote (likhitaṃ) this *Rāmacaritamānasa* in the village of Kamalapura belonging to the pargana of Mahisadala. The Book was intended for the reading of Srīmatī Rāṇī Jānakī in an auspicious place.' The information is important in respects more than one. The pargana of Mahisadal has with good measure of confidence been identified with the Mahisadal Raj Estate by D. P. Ghosh.[5] It was once one of the largest estates in the district of Midnapore lying mostly in the Tamluk sub-division of West Bengal. According to the available information, Rāṇī Jānakī, a widow of Ānandalāl Upādhyāya, held the charge of the *Zamindari* of Mahisadal between 1765 and 1804.[6] The exact location of the village of Kamalapura is not certain, but it can reasonably be ascertained to have been situated in the vicinity of the mauja Garh Kamalpur in Police Station Mahisadal. Incidentally it was at Garh Kamalpur that the erstwhile residence of the feudal lords of the Estate was situated. Rāṇī Jānakī was a deeply religious person who caused several temples to be built around Mahisadal, all dedicated to the different aspects of Rāma. She must have been an enlightened woman too, and a patron of art, the best proof of her learning being that the manuscript copy was intended for her own reading and not for mere recitation before her.

The manuscript is the handiwork of Ichhārāma Miśra. Interestingly enough, he wished scrupulously to record his part in the execution of the copy, no doubt with a view to perpetuating his name to the posterity in association with his patron. Otherwise, he is a person of unknown antecedents. We have no definitive information from the colophons or from any other sources regarding his background either as a manuscript-writer or as an artist. However, two circumstances namely, that the work is a fairly correct copy in original Avadhī and that the Nagari characters have been employed would indicate, albeit indirectly, a connection with Uttar Pradesh not only for him but also for his patron, particularly in respect of their upbringing and training. Significantly such a supposition finds support in a local tradition which has it that the family of Rāṇī Jānakī hailed from Uttar Pradesh. There is no mention of the name of the artist entrusted with the work of illustration here. Whether Ichhārāma Miśra was acting both as a scribe and an illustrator, or whether the painter was altogether a different person, it is difficult to say. It may generally be assumed on the basis of usual practice followed for the preparation of illustrated manuscripts[7] that the artist was a different person. The omission of his name may denote a secondary role played by him in the total execution of the manuscript.

The colophons further record the progressive dates of completion of each chapter of the set. The date is recorded synchronistically in the Vikrama era, the Śaka era and the Vilāyati era as is shown in the following tabulated statement.

SYNCHRONISTIC CHART OF DATES

No. (1)	The dated portion of the MS. (2)	Vilāyati era (3)	Śaka era (4)	Vikrama era (5)
1.	*Bāla-Kāṇḍa*, Folio page No. 115b	On the 7th tithi (day) in the dark fortnight of the month of Chaitra in the year 1180 of the Vilāyati sāla =March-April, 1773 A.D.	1694= 1772-73 A.D.	1829= 1772-73 A.D.
2.	*Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa*, Folio page No. 192b	On Sunday (Ravivāsare) the third day of the month of Jaiṣta in the Vilāyati year 1181= May-June, 1774 A.D.	1696= 1774 A.D.	1823= 1766 A.D.
3.	*Araṇya-Kāṇḍa*, Folio page No. 213b	On Thursday (Guravāsare), the 7th tithi (day) in the month of Āṣāḍha (i.e. the 7th day of the first fortnight of the month of Āṣāḍha in the Vilāyati year 1181=June-July, 1774 A.D.	1696= 1774 A.D.	1823= 1766 A.D.
4.	*Kiṣkindhā-Kāṇḍa*	Lost	Lost	Lost
5.	*Sundara-Kāṇḍa* Folio page No. 240b	Corrupt and unintelligible through substitution of original leaves.		

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
6.	*Laṅkā-Kāṇḍa*, Folio page No. 311b	On Monday (Somavāre), the 5th tithi (day) in the dark fortnight of the month of Phalguna in the year 1182 of the Vilāyati sāla=February-March, 1775 A.D.	1697= 1775 A.D.	1823= 1766 A.D.
7.	*Uttara-Kāṇḍa*	Lost	Lost	Lost

The method followed for recording the progressive dates of execution of the manuscript is interesting in several ways. It strikes us at once that the writer should avail of the Vilāyati era in preference to the Bengali era. The Vilāyati era, although closely allied to the Bengali era, was current in Orissa[8] and its use points to the intimate relation of interchange between the Mahisadal Raj Estate and the contiguous regions of Orissa in the field of Culture and education. It may be seen from a glance at the chart that there is general agreement between the years recorded in the Vilāyati era and the Śaka era. In the *Bāla-Kāṇḍa* even the year in the Vikrama era concurs with the other two years. But, in using the Vikrama year in the subsequent chapters the scribe evidently made a mistake for he could not get correct years of the Vikrama era which was falling into disuse in eastern India.[9] On the other hand, the copyist appears to be most confident in the reckoning of the date in the Vilāyati era which was available locally. It would, therefore, be reasonable to suppose that he recorded the date in the Vilāyati era correctly. Calculating on this basis, it will be seen that the bulk of the manuscript from the *Bāla-Kāṇḍa* to the *Laṅkā-Kāṇḍa* was completed between March-April, 1773 A.D. and February-March, 1775 A.D. For the remaining portion of the *Uttara-Kāṇḍa*, keeping in view the average pace of the progress of the work, we may assume that it was written down not too long after, say by the end of the year 1775 A.D.

We have already noted above that the manuscript-copy is executed on paper. It is a paper of thick variety with a high degree of ink acceptance and is well serviceable both for writing and artistic purposes. Curiously enough, the paper is not of indigenous origin but of English manufacture as is borne out from the water marks of trade symbols and names of the English manufacturers on the papers.[10] As regards others formal features of the manuscript, the set reveals its adoption of the format and technique of book production introduced in India by the Mughals as against the traditional form of the *grantha* class of manuscripts of the earlier period.[11] Its leaves, although not actually bound together like an album, are oblong with the short side forming the spine—an arrangement which by itself effects the verticality of the manuscript.

In an illustrated manuscript the main focus of attention is invariably drawn towards its pictures. In this respect our set is very rich indeed. The painted material consists of illuminated borders and actual illustrations of events described in the text. The coloured borders appear on every page immediately adjoining the written matter and the panels of pictures and consist of a narrow band contained between ruled lines in black. The narrow band is filled with colour red, yellow or green. The borders are further made into a variety of designs of diagramatic character and add to the liveliness of the pages and impart an element of unity between the writing and the pictures. D. P. Ghosh finds some vestiges of Mughal manuscript painting in there.[12] However, it may be pointed out that the coloured border here is far simpler in style and content than the full fledged *Hashiya* paintings drawn around the script area in Mughal productions.

The manuscript is profusely illustrated with as many as 153 paintings existing in the set. It appears that there were more of them judging from the folios the orignals of which are no longer available. The paintings are bearing upon the theme of the text, and are carefully planned and integrated with the run of the script. These are of different sizes and are shown in a variety of shapes, oblong or rectangular. In accordance with the requirement of the narrative, these are accommodated any place on the folios. Thus, some cover the entire page, or better part of it, while others are placed in the upper, middle or lower section of the folio. On rare occasions when more than one illustrations occupy the same folio these are placed one below the other with the written matter filling in the intervening space.

A critical study of the technique and style of the paintings reveals that the artist was partly innovating and partly treading the conventional path in the composition of his art. It is interesting to note that the pictures are executed directly on the rough surface of the paper without any prior preparation of the ground. A technical process of this nature is quite different from the usually elaborate method and technique of the preparation of the ground prescribed by the śilpa texts and adhered to by the manuscript illustrations of the earlier period.[13] More significantly, except on very rare occasions the paper has been left unpainted and unprimed to provide a white background to the figures painted. On this ground a preliminary sketch of the basic elements of the composition was first drawn in very light red. Evidence of this practice can still be seen from the remnants of the first sketch which have escaped the process of wiping by the artist. After finishing the drawing, colours were applied to fill in the outlined areas with a high degree of competence so that the finished colour aplication looks even and compact even today. The artists palette, however, had only a limited range of colours. The main colours employed are indigo blue, red, yellow ochre, green, lamp-black and white, or were combinations of their different shades. After applying body colour, and after colouring all other details of the painting, the outlines of contours were drawn in black as the finishing line. The corrections and changes, wherever necessary, were carried out with the help of white.

The quality of drawing is uniformly of a high standard with the lines being sure, steady and powerful all through the series. The drawing, however is basically linear, and the painter did not make any use of shading for suggesting volume and modulations. The pictorial effect of this is that the figures are flat and two dimensional. The composition is compact and the paintings are chiefly conceived of horizontally, although in a few cases as emphasis on vertical or diagonal arrangement may also be noticed. As far as the grouping of figures is concerned, it may be seen that the most significant or the central character of the theme is generally brought near the centre of the composition with other figures converging towards it. When the principal figure occupies one side, the lesser ones occupy another. In pursuance of the principle of hierarchic scaling the prime character also tends to be larger in height than the others. This is a common enough practice and is in consonance with the established norms of traditional Indian paintng.

An important point to note in this connection is that in a strictly technical sense the paintings can hardly be designated as miniatures. Firstly, they do not retain the scale of miniatures. Secondly, their bold workmaship and the bare surface purposefully left unfinished go against the very compositional principle of miniatures. Furthermore, it will be seen that even when enlarged there is no loss of depth and vibration of colour.

Regarding the style of the paintings Ghosh has an interesting observation to make. He says that 'the style of the paintings shows a marked variety in the earlier and later groups denoting employment of more than one artist.[14] While the learned scholar is reticent over the grounds of his statement, the interal evidence of the manuscript does not show up the paintings as having linear connection with more than one genre of artistic expression. On the other hand, a critical scrutiny of the set seems to demonstrate that in the mode of expression and interest as also in accent and inflexion all the paintings belong to one and the same style. All the same, one cannot perhaps rule out the possibility of the artist having been provided with the services of some of his own pupils in the accomplishment of the commission. In such an eventuality the latter's contributions are least likely to deviate from the path of the master's direction and to affect substantially the genre of the paintng initiated by him. There is a probability that the illustrator ot the Asutosh Museum copy of the *Rāmācaritamānasa* also had addressed himself to his task in collaboration with a number of his own disciples. As a result some variations in the treatment of the subject come to the fore arising out of the individual skill and resourcefulness of the artists involved, but the impact is further peripheral and do not modify the overall character and position of the paintings.

Obviously narration is the principal occupation of the illustrations. For this reason the main focus of attention is invariably drawn towards the representation of human figures. In this regard we find that deities, semi-divine personalities, ascetics, kings, warriors, women of noble birth and attendants both male and female, have been delineated. But there is no variety in the treatment of human figures. The faces are of the impersonal type, and except for deities, distinguished by their complexion and a few other attributes, there is little in the bodily features of men and women to distinguish one from the other. The head is invariably in profile view ; it may be either in left or right profile according to the position of man or woman portrayed. The face is endowed with a sharply pointed nose and a small mouth with thin lips. The eyes are lenticular in shape and are elongated ,with collyrium and surmounted by a correspondingly long eyebrow. Bodies are shown in front view or in three-quarter view while the lips and legs are shown in profile. The individual parts of bodies are delineated clearly. In addition to tracing the contour of limbs, the muscular upper part of bodies is indicated by means of a selective use of a few secondary lines which incidentally bring out some modulation of the limbs. Men wear moustache and beard pointed at the chin. The dress commonly used by men is a tight-fitting pyjama reaching upto the ankles with or without a waist shash. A short scarf may be seen thrown across the shoulders leaving the upper part of bodies devoid of any further clothing. The typical costume of women is a richly coloured pyjama reaching the ankles. The upper half of the female body is left uncovered except for a scarf which is wrapped round the neck and drawn over the head covering the coiffure and forming a sort of veil or wimple (*oḍhanī*). It, however, affords a side view of the hair arrangement. Stripes, dot and cross pattern seems to be the favourite motifs on the garments of men and women.

Giving a summary assessment of the style of the extant specimens of paintings, D. P. Ghosh has observed that ‘ the Paintings of the manuscript by the Midnapore artists are forerunners of the indigenous paṭ style of Bengal. Although betraying strong Orissan influence and reminiscent of Mughal and ancient Indian conventions, all the elements of folk art are present, story telling, vivid colours, determined brush strokes and broad summary execution’[15].

He points out that the figural drawing in combined profile and front view with the elliptical eyes extended to the ear is similar in convention to the treatment of the same found in the contemporary palm leaf and paper manuscripts in Orissa. Moreover, the style in which the scarf over the heads of women is treated standing out behind the head, affords interesting parallelism with the convention noticeable in the palm-leaf manuscript of Amaruśataka from Mayurbhanja belonging to the sixteenth or seventeenth century.[16] The veteran scholar, howevei, does not view the art as entirely Orissan in character. He says that 'instead of the supple and Orissan forms', the figures 'are compact and firm'. The strength and vitality of the Orissan style is blended with the suavity of Bengal in this remarkable series of manuscript paintings[17]. By first glance, the arguments put forward by Ghosh may appear to be quite cogent and therefore, worth accepting. The observation apparently is founded on the assumption that the Mahisadal Raj Estate being geographically close to Orissa imbibed some of the traits of the influential painting tradition of the adjoining tract through natural cultural contact. That there was a sort of cultural intercourse between the Estate and Orissa becomes evident from the use in our manuscript of the Vilāyati era which was current in Orissa. However, leaving aside the question of use of a local era, it will be seen that the suggestion of stylistic resemblances between the Asutosh Museum *Rāmacaritamānasa* and the painting tradition of Orissa does not hold water for long. For, as will be discussed below, both in spirit and form the present set of illustrations belongs to an altogether different order.

In fact, the extant illustrations are more appropriately to be compared with the *Laur-Chandā* paintings of the fifteenth century now in the collection of the Bharat Kala Bhavan[18]. The affinity of the two styles is clearly attested by the following points of resemblance :

(1) In both places the paintings exhibit elements of folkish treatment. It strikes us that a tendency towards simplification permeates the entire process of execution in the present set of illustrations. During the course of this process, the artist has taken considerable liberty and has also shown a spirit of inventiveness. For instance, it may be mentioned that the coloured border is delineated in the form of a single coloured band. The unusual

variety of shapes in illustrations and their uninhibited placement on the folios as per requirement of the narrative are suggestive of a new approach on the part of the painter. The use of plain surface of the paper in preference to bright backgrounds for pictorial effect shows his independent mind. The palette's limited range of colours, the thinness of colours applied, and absence of polished finish may also be noticed in this connection. The inclination for simplification is further detected in the less crowded scenes, in the treatment of nature, in the elementary means adopted for suggesting a locale, and also in the rendering of costumes. It is also attested by the reduction of formulae employed for dealing with iconographical material. Thus the figures are saved from being encumbered with all the complex details of poses, number of hands, various types of weapons and other attributes. Instead, the artist lays stress on a certain degree of informality which is really refreshing.

(2) On both occasions, again, the physical type reveals several common features. An outstanding characteristic of the physical structure of bodies in both places is the elongated lower part of the body. In the treatment of the male figure, the distortion and exaggeration of the chest, a stereotyped convention of the medieval painting tradition, is much less pronounced here. Some of the facial features like the shape of the eyes, sharp nose, thin lips and the form of the chin also afford interesting parallelism between the two manuscripts. Similarly may be detected in respect of the workmanship of the moustache and beard too. The hands and feet are drawn in the same indifferent fashion both in the *Rāmacaritamānasa* and the *Laur-Chandā.*

(3) In both places again the figures are seated on their haunches at the further side of the throne or cushions or stools. The manner of holding flowers between the thumb and the forefinger is also noteworthy in this connection.

(4) The close-fitting pyjama as the lower body garment for both male and female is commonly found in both. The various textile pattern like the stripes, dot and cross marks are usual in both the places. One feature of the female costume is most interesting. In the *Rāmacaritamānasa* manuscript women folk wear *oḍhanī* (wimple) which covers the back of the coiffure but we get a

side view of the hair held behind in the form of a bun. Such a mannerism is closely allied to the treatment of the same feature in the *Laur-Chandā*.

(5) The use of pink as body colour is seen in both the places.

(6) The grateful contour lines of bodies in the *Rāmacaritamānasa* illustrations show a kind of treatment which recalls the body contours as seen in the *Laur-Chandā*.

(7) Both are Avadhī manuscripts.

On the basis of the above stylistic affinities, it would be reasonable to conjecture that the illustrator of the *Rāmacaritamānasa* manuscript was well-versed in the painting tradition which had brought out the *Laur-Chandā* manuscript of the Bharat Kala Bhavan and that his handiwork represents the continuity of a tradition. Karl Khandalvala and Moti Chandra contend that *Laur-Chandā* in the Bharat Kala Bhavan was painted in Jaunpur. According to their formulation the place was a great Centre of painting in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries sustained by a group of competent and professional manuscript illustrators. Although it shared some of the significant characteristics of the Western Indian school, it eventually developed an individual style of its own. A number of illustrated manuscripts including Avadhī manuscripts were produced at this centre during its opulent period. Both the types of painting—paintings of a high order and those done in a folk style were being collected and brought out from here[19]. It may be argued, however, that the extant copy of the *Rāmacaritamānasa* is separated from the *Laur-Chandā* manuscript by a margin of nearly 300 years, and that much of the vitality and force of the Jaunpur tradition was lost by the end of the sixteenth century[20]. Nonetheless, the specific points, referred to above, affirm that the relation between the two manuscripts was far from being superficial. Nor can the occurrance of features which constitute some of the component elements of the Jaunpur style be explained away merely by stating that our illustrator acquired the necessary knowledge and experience of the painting tradition of Jaunpur through some illustrated manuscripts from Jaunpur which were available locally to him. It would be only fair to assume that the illustrator had a more organised and deep rooted connection with the Jaunpur tradition. It may be recalled here that according to the local tradition, the feudatory family of the Mahisadal Raj Estate emigrated from Uttar Pradesh. The proficiency in the Avadhī dialect and the use of the Nagari script would tend to support this fact. The likelihood is that the family brought with its own illustrator, who, on his part, carried with him some of the best traits of a still surviving painting tradition of his native country. Once the contention, for whatever its worth, is accepted, it negates the conclusion of Ghosh that 'the illustrations are undoubtedly the work of local Midnapore artists.'[21] At best, it can be said that the artist did not totally ignore his association with Bengal, the place where he carried out his art. The presence of such typical Bengal motifs as the horse endowed with pointed nose and two forelegs repraised and the edges of garments delineated with double lines separating the body contours from the raiment suggest that he had received at some time an infusion of the Bengal influence.

To sum up, the present copy of the *Rāmacaritamānasa* is of crucial importance in the history of manuscript production in India in the eighteenth century on both the counts of its art content as well as its historical content. Although the foregoing analysis ends to indicate that the art is in the main an offshoot of the painting style of Jaunpur, and further that strains of various schools of Indian miniature painting are combined in the present set, it will not be proper to conclude that it is merely derivative in character. In fact, the diversity in the extent of influence from different sources constitutes only one aspect of the artistic expression evolved in the series. The art has several outstanding features to give it an individual character of its own. The draughtsmanship of the paintings, although simple, reveals the highly developed skill of the painter. The secondary lines employed to convey the impression of modulation of individual features of the body-forms constitute a distinct improvement of the modes of expression of earlier items. Certainly photographic realism is not a property here, but the pictures are not inert either and the total effect of the composition carries a sense of dynamic movement. A singular feature of the paintings in the series is that there is no trace of decadence anywhere as is wont in the case of paintings vulnerable to hieratic tradition. At the substratum of this creative work

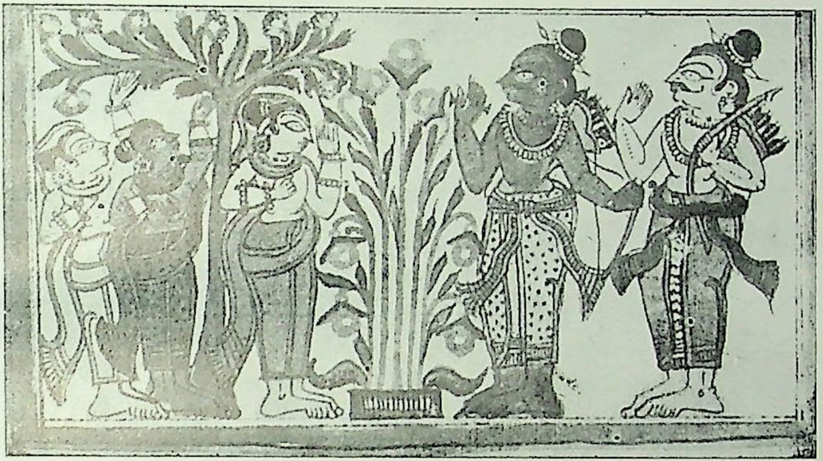

Fig. 1. The first meeting of Rāma and Sītā
(Folio No. 806 size 9.6 cm × 17.5 cm)

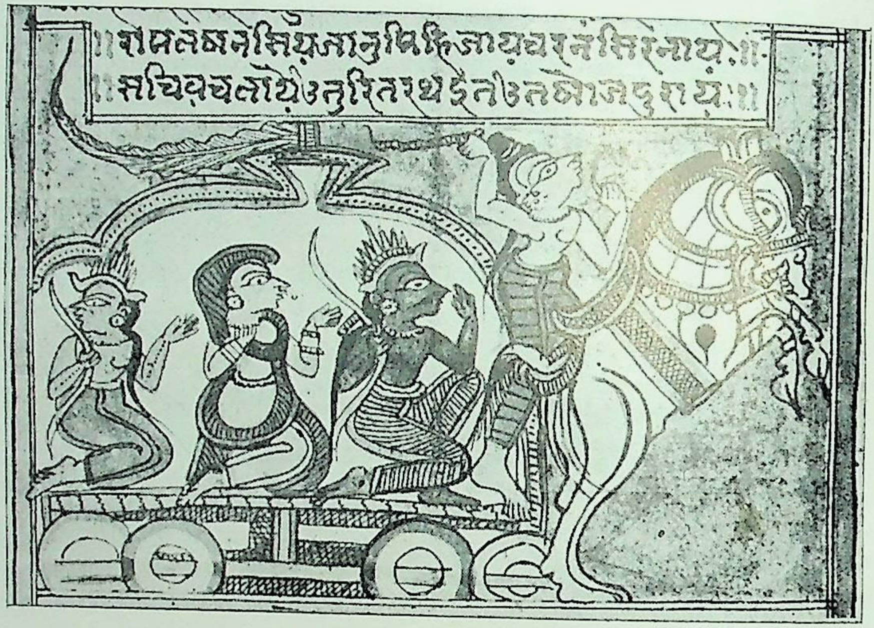

Fig. 2. Rāma and his party being driven to the forest by Sumantra
(Folio No. 1366 size 11.8 cm × 17.2 cm)

of art lies the folk inspiration of the artist which accounts for much of its strength and vitality, and there is no gainsaying of the fact that in perception, sensitivity and liveliness it is a veritable standard-bearer of folk art tradition in India. It is this element again which allows it to free itself from the limits of heiratic formula.

The following illustrations will give us an idea of the style and content of the paintings in the set :

Figure 1 : The first meeting of Rāma and Sītā. Folio No. 80b, Size 9.6 cm. × 17.5 cm.

Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, guests of King of Videha, were taking a stroll in the morning in the flower garden of the palace. At that same hour, Sītā also came out there, sent by her mother to worship at the shrine of Pārvatī. Thus it happened that Rāma and Sītā came to see each other for the first time in a creeper covered bower and immediately fell in love.

On the right, Rāma, green-bodied, with moustache, hair arranged in a top-knot and bejewelled, in yellow, cross-patterned pyjama and red waist-sash, holding bow in left hand, with quiver placed over the left shoulder, is standing beside a flowering plant and gazing at Sītā. The daughter of Janaka, yellow complexioned, her hair arranged in a neat chignon and bejewelled, wearing red pyjama and scarf, is standing under flowering tree and looking towards Rāma. She is attended by two companions, red and yellow skinned, in green and pink dresses. Behind Rāma stands Lakṣmaṇa in red pyjama and looks on.

Figure 2 : Rāma and his party being driven to the forest by Sumantra. Folio No. 136b, Size 11.8 cm × 17.2 cm.

On the eve of Rāma's investiture as the heir apparent of the throne of Ayodhyā disaster fell on it royal house. Kaikeyī, the favourite queen of Daśaratha, asked for sending Rāma in exile for fourteen years and the installation of her son Bharata as regent. In order to be true to his words, the King had to agree to this. Eventually, at this command, Sumantra quickly made ready the chariot and begged Rāma to mount on it. The two brothers, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa mounted the chariot with Sītā and set forth after doing mental obeisance to Ayodhyā.

Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa are mounted, seated on the chariot drawn by one horse and leaving for exile. Rāma and his wife are gazing ahead while Lakṣmaṇa is turned to the right and looks over his shoulder. Before them stands Sumantra, yellow in complexion, in blue and black striped pyjama, holding the reins in left hand and driving whip in the right. The horse, white in skin and fully caprisoned, is prancing up urged by the charioteer. The chariot, shown with four wheels, has a decorated undercarriage and arched covering over the carriage topped by a flag staff and banner. Plain orange background.

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[1] Allchin, F. R., *Kavitāvalī by Tulsīdās*, London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1964, pp, 32 ff.

[2] *The Holy Lake of the Acts of Rāma by Tulasī Dās*, Translated by W. D. P. Hill, London : Oxford University Press, 1952.

[3] A brief notice of the manuscript accompanied by a few illustrations was first published by D. P. Ghosh in an article entitled 'An Illustrated Rāmāyaṇa Manuscript of Tulsīdās and Paṭs from Bengal', published in the *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*'. Vol. XIII (Calcutta, 1945), pp. 130-38. In his paper Ghosh referred to the text both as the Rāmāyaṇa and the Rāmacaritamānasa, but the full and proper name of the work has repeatedly been given in the colophons as the Rāmacaritamānasa.

[4] Folio Nos. 225 and 255-56 belonging to the Kishkindha and Lanka-Kanda respectively are missing. The last couple of pages of the Uttara-Kanda are also not available.

[5] Ghosh, D. P., *Op. cit.*, p. 130.

[6] Hunter, W. W. *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. III, London Trubner & Co., 1876, pp. 206-207.

[7] Moti Chandra, *Jaina Miniature Paintings from Western India*, Ahmedabad : Jaina Art Publication Series No. 1, 1949, p. 94. Also, S. K. Saraswati, 'East Indian Manuscript Painting', *Chhavi*, Banaras : Bharat Kala Bhawan, 1971, p. 251. Karl Khandalavala and Moti Chandra seem to believe that in some cases the expression '*likhitam*' stands both for writing and painting. See K. J. Khandalavala, and Moti Chandra, *New Documents of Indian Painting—A Reappraisal*, Bombay : The Prince of Wales Museum, 1969, p. 24, 27.

[8] The Vilāyati era originating in A.D. 593 is known to be in use in Orissa and is closely connected with the Bengali era, cf. L. D. S. Pillai, *An Indian Ephemeries*. Vol. I, Part I, Madras : Superintendent, Govt. Press, 1922, p. 54.

[9] Bhattasali, N. K. 'Determination of the Epoc of the Parganāti era', *Indian Antiquity*. Vol. L. II, Bombay, 1923, pp. 314-320.

[10] It shows that the manuscript writer as also the illustrator had adopted themselves well in the utilisation of the foreign made paper. The quality of the paper used and the mould marks occurring on it compare favourably with the kind of paper used by the East India Company in the contemporary period. cf. *Extract from Miscellaneous Revenue Proceedings*. Vol. I, 1722-76, The State Archives of West Bengal, Calcutta.

[11] Ray, N. R.—*Mughal Court Painting*, Calcutta, Indian Museum, 1975, pp. 42-43.

[12] Ghosh, D. P., 'An Illustrated Ramayaṇa Manuscript of Tulsīdās and Paṭs from Bengal', *op. cit.*, p. 130.

[13] Moti Chandra, *Jaina Miniature Paintings from Western India. op. cit.*, pp. 98 ff. For a general discussion on the method and technique of preparation of the ground prescribed by the Silpa texts, See. A. K. Bhattacharyya, *Technique of Indian Painting*. Calcutta : Saraswat Library, 1976, pp. 39-44.

[14] Ghosh, D. P., 'An Illustrated Rāmāyaṇa Manuscript of Tulsīdās and Paṭs from Bengal', *op. cit.*, p. 130.

[15] Ghosh, D. P., *ibid.*, p. 133.

[16] Kramrisch, S., 'The Hundred Verses of Amaru, Illustrated', *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*. Vol. VIII, Calcutta, 1940, p. 225, pl. X.

[17] Ghosh, D. P. 'An Illustrated Rāmāyaṇa Manuscript of Tulsīdās and Paṭs from Bengal', *op. cit.*, p. 133.

[18] Rai Krishnadas, 'An Illustrated Avadhī MS. of Laur-Chandā in the Bharat Kala Bhavana, Banaras', *Lalit Kala*. Nos. 1-2, New Delhi, Lalit Kala Akademi, 1955-56, pp. 66 ff & Pls. E & XVII.

[19] Khandalavala, K. and Motichandra, *New Documents of Indian Painting—A Reappraisal, op. cit.*, pp. 23-27, 53-55.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 110 ff.

[21] Ghosh, D. P., 'An Illustrated Rāmāyaṇa Manuscript of Tulsīdās and Paṭs from Bengal', *op. cit.*, p. 130.

RĀMĀYAṆA RELIEFS IN STONE IN RAJASTHAN TEMPLES

C. MARGABANDHU

Introduction[1]

THE story of Lord Rama or the Ramakatha is also one of the themes that develops to a considerable degree in the Temple art of Rajasthan which is revealed by the carvings found on the walls of shrines.

In general the panels are found carved in relief and are found on the outer portion of the temples, in the ceilings of the *mandapa*, as well as *chajjas* of the *ardha-mandapa* and seem to be as widespread as the narrative themes depicted on them.

Nature of Narration of the Theme

Normally the facts of the narrative are to be continuous from one event succeeding the other in a connected pattern of story-telling concluding in the final theme representing the end of the story. But this does not seem to have been the case in evidence. The representations on the other hand reveal that they were arranged into a modulated pattern to suit the artistic features and merge with the temple architecture without undue emphasis on the sculptural delineations and intrinsic trends. The details of carvings are often found as horizontal friezes above the *pitha* above which are found represented in the niches the main iconic cult representations of the main deities to which the temple is dedicated.

Early Evidence

In an assessment of such a study, the main problem arises as to the evidence of early representations in the temple and whether it has its roots in the region or has been adopted from elsewhere.

This aspect of the problem has to be looked from other sources, the evidence of which add more information and the events could be narrated in the process of historical development of the origin of Ramayana themes depicted in the temple art.

The epigraphical records recovered from western India allude to the lineage of Rama and his valour in a number of inscriptions of the royal families. Some of them do belong to the early times that fill up the lacunae in the art evidence. Along with inscriptions eulogising Rama and his many exploits and courage, many sculptures were recovered with inscriptions that add details to their chronology.

Hence all these furnish new information to the Rama legend and its historical development in the narrative art which gains momentum sometime during the ninth and tenth centuries A.D. By the eleventh century A.D. the representations of Ramayana seems to form part of the temple art of Rajasthan.

The evidence of the representations in so far as they are known do not support any early chronological continuum. It is a fruitful source of discussion to argue for its later origins in western India while its early origins in an extensive manner are revealed in the art of the neighbouring areas.

The early representations of Ramakatha is recorded from the fertile land of Madhyadesa both in clay and stone. Some of the terracotta panels represent stray finds but they possibly indicate the presence of their depictions in brick temples erected during the Gupta period. Most of them represent the fruitful products of the Gupta times.

A rapid review of the scenes represented from the temples of central and eastern India from Gupta and post-Gupta period would serve as background to the later development of this theme in regions of western India.

Representations of Ramkatha in Temples of Madhyadesa

The Vishnu temple at Deogarh[2] in central India is a classic example where many of the scenes are represented as independent panels but could be visualised in a narrative sequence. Foremost among them are Rama freeing Ahalya (PL. 1), visit to sage Atri's hermitage, abduction of Sita by Ravana, Vāli lying on the lap of Tara with the arrow shot by Rama, Sūrpanakha episode (PL. 2) and so on. Of the same time range[3] is a panel representing Nila building the bridge of rocks across the sea ; Lakshmana and Sugriva guiding and inspiring them. These scenes depicting minute details indicate a tendency to conceptualise the theme to the point of exactitude of the epical literary version of the story.

Another temple of the same period which has yielded evidence of Ramayana panels is one at Nachna, District Panna. Mention has to be made among them, Ravana in the form of a recluse begging alms from Sita. (PL 3) The backdrop is realistically portrayed representing two huts made of stones with flowering trees revealing forest wealth. The natural depiction and easy warmth portray a grim contrast to the episode that would soon follow. In another scene is the joyous monkeys lifting pieces of stones to build a bridge over the ocean. In the background are seen Rama and Lakshmana holding bow and arrow. The idiom belongs to the typical mature Gupta tradition of the fifth century A.D.[4]

Many Gupta terracotta panels, presently in the Jhajjar Museum,[5] Haryana, represent some important episodes from the Ramakatha. A terracotta relief from Chausa[6] near Buxar, District Shahabad depicts a Ramayana scene along with many other terracottas. It depicts a Ramayana panel in continuous sequence of which, the one represents Rama and Lakshmana surrounded by the monkeys (PL 4).

Belonging to this same[7] group of terracotta panels is a scene representing Ravana approaching Sita in the guise of a mendicant. A notable feature is the depiction of a donkey's head over his turban. He holds a water vessel in his left hand. It indicates that it was a part of a panel belonging to a brick temple. It is datable to the fifth century A.D.

Some terracotta panels at the brick temple at Bhitar-gaon[8] has been identified to be representations from the epic narrative. One of them represents the legend of Kākāsura. Rama is resting on the lap of Sita when the crow attacked and drops of blood oozed on Lord Rama who woke up and knowing details he aimed

RAMAYANA RELIEFS IN STONE IN RAJASTHAN TEMPLES

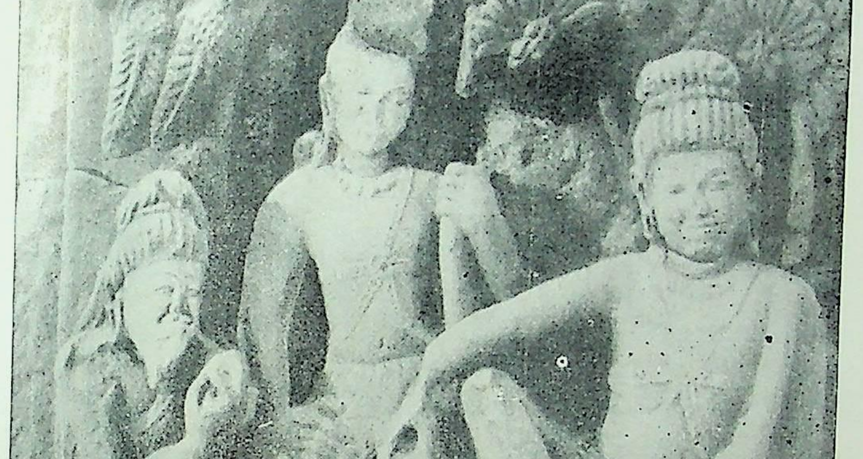

PLATE 1 : Rama freeing Ahalya (Temple at Deogarh)

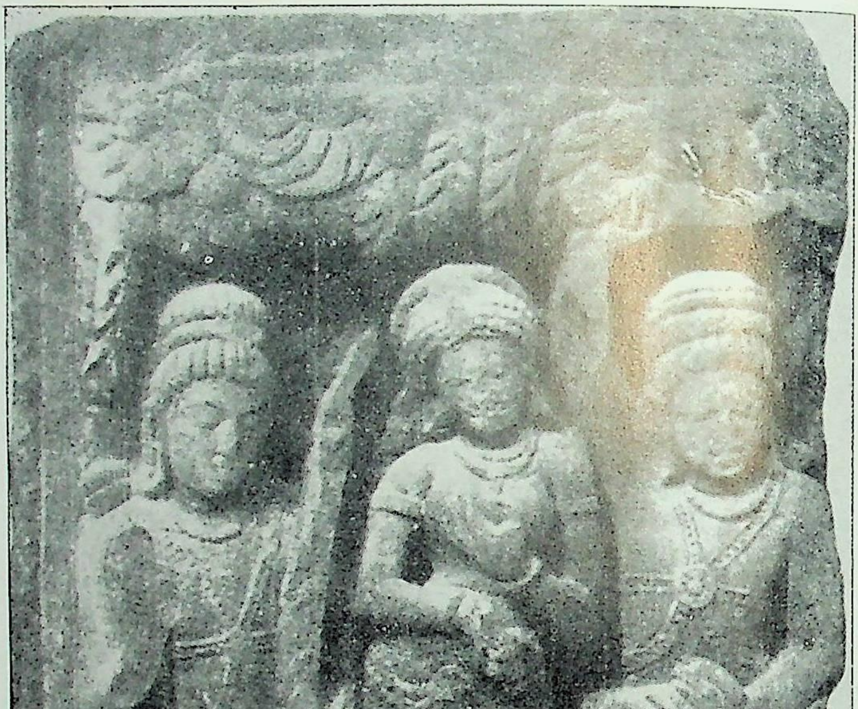

PLATE 2 : Lakshmaṇa disfiguring Śūrpaṇakhā
(Temple at Deogarh)

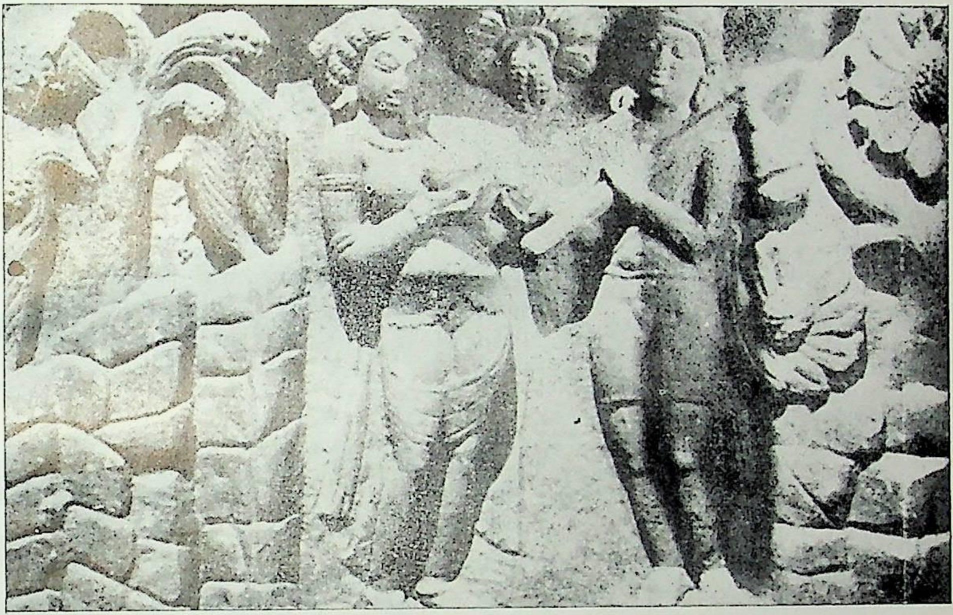

PLATE 3 : Ravana in the form of a Recluse is begging alms from Sita
(Temple at Nachna)

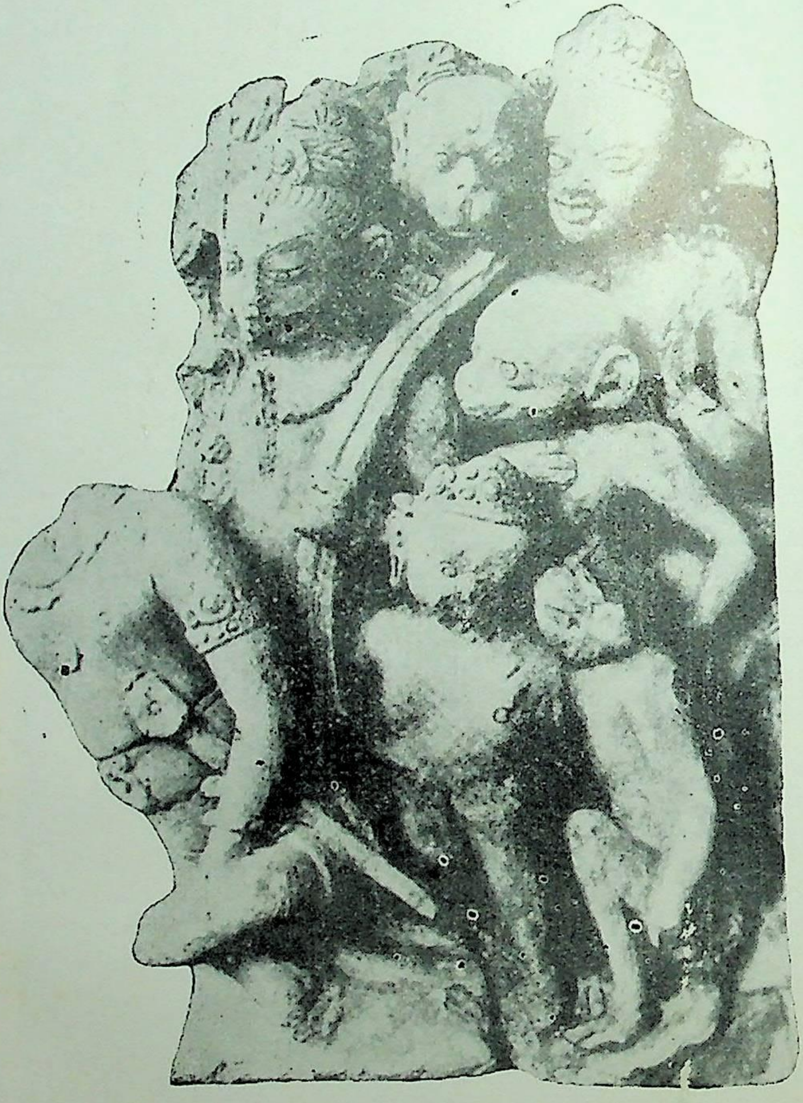

PLATE 4: Rama and Lakshmana surrounded by monkeys (Terracotta)—Chausa, near Buxar.

through *Kuśa* grass the *Brahmāstra* at the crow who was forgiven later, but losing the right eye. The panel depicts Rama with a halo and the *darbha* is also visible while the crow is just seen in-between them.

A few terracottas have also been brought to light at Saheth-Maheth[9] some time ago. Most of the scenes are difficult to identify but the remains represent the existence of a brick temple devoted to Vishnu at the place. One of them represents Hanuman and another scene is a fight of two monkeys recalling the episode of Virūpāksha and Sugrīva in combat.[10]

Apart from these some representations of Ramayana scenes were also reported at Aphsad,[11] an ancient mound 23 km. north-east of Nawada (Bihar) in stucco medium, forming part of a wall of an old temple. Near about was also found the Aphsad stone inscription[12] below a Varaha figure which refers to the construction of a temple of Vishnu by King Ādityasena and his mother who built a religious college, *matha* and a tank. The scenes[13] dipicted include Rama, Sita and Lakshmana crossing the Ganga in the boat at the *Bhārdwaja* Āshram, seated below a tree, crossing of the Yamuna by the wooden raft ; a forest scene with Rama and Sita and Lakshmana following them ; visit of Bharata to Rama in the forest and his return to Ayodhya with his *pāduka*, etc. It is for the first time that representations of Ramayana scenes are carved in sequence from Rama's crossing the Ganga to Bharata meeting him at Chitrakuta. These panels seem to be contemporary with the temple built by Ādityasena datable to the seventh century A.D.[14]

In the light of the early development of the epic theme that is taking its shape in the religious art of Madhyadeśa, its later spread to other places, both in contemporary and later times point to further development. Most of them depicted in central and eastern India are of such a nature that they occupied prominent place in the religious rt mostly in Vaishnavite shrines.

The development of the temple art of Rajasthan discount the epic narrative in early times since connected and cohesive evidence is yet to reveal an early development of the narrative in any form in the religious art.

Epigraphical Records from Rajasthan

But further information is revealed by the epigraphical records, though far and few of the literary fame of the Ramakatha indicate a chronological range from about the fifth to the fifteenth century A.D. It is a considerable period of time during which the knowledge of Ramakatha was well developed in the traditional literature. Moreover, some early sculptures depicting the episodes of Ramayana scenes add further cogency to the prevalence of Ramakatha.

In an early inscription at Gangadhar,[15] District Jhalāwar (423 A.D.)—of the Aulīkara ruler Visvavarman, the king is described as a standard of comparison even for Rama and Bhagīratha.

बद्रया वृहस्पति-समस्स ळ लेन्टु वक्तः (?) ।
औपभ्य-भूत इव रामभरीर थाभ्यां (?) ।।
श . . . , . . . , . .

The object of the inscription being to record how a certain Mayūrākshaka, minister of Visvavarman built a temple of Vishnu—also a temple of Divine mothers (*Saptamātrika*) and a large well.

Inscriptions of Gurjara-Pratiharas

An important centre of the early rulers of north-west Rajasthan *viz*. the Gūrjara-Pratīhāras had their capital at Mandor or Māndavyapura, eight kms. from Jodhpur does not reveal any evidence in their art tradition of the Ramakatha.

However, two epigraphical records of this dynasty are quite revealing instances to bring the Rama episode as an example to emulate and to identify the qualities of one of the main character *viz*., Lakshmana into the royal appendage of the Gūrjara-Pratīhāras.

The Jodhpur inscription (V.S. 894) of the Pratīhāra ruler Bauka originally brought from Mandor, records his exploits and also enumerates his dynastic lineage. With the earliest ruler Harischandra, a Brahmana with his conquest of Māndavyapura as his capital. The dynasty was called after Lakshmana who served as a Pratīhara to his elder brother in the form of a *sleṣha.*

Sva bhrāthrā Rāmabhadrasya
Pratīhāryām krtam yatah
Srī Pratīhāravamso' yam
Atas—Chonnayatim—Āpunuyāt[16]

In another undated *Praśasti* from Gwalior of the Gūrjara-Pratīhāra King Bhojadeva,[17] the lineage tracing to the brother of Rama has been further elaborated.

The inscription records the erection of a house in his seraglio (*antahpura*) by the Gūrjara-Pratīhāra king Bhoja in honour of Vishnu (*Narakadvisa*) and begins with an invocation to the Lord. Next it describes the creation of the Sun and names of the important kings of the Solar race. It refers to Rama and his terrible fight with Ravana. The family to which Bhoja belonged is traced from Saumitri a metronymic of Lakshmana, the brother of Rama.

After occasional eulogies the geneology with Lakshmana of the Solar race mentions then Nagabhata, Kakkuta, Devaraja, Vatsaraja, Nagabhata and Rama as immediate predecessors of Bhoja. He had, Rama as his son who equalled his glorious namesake in prowess and exploits described in ambiguous, *sleṣha*. Rama's son was Mihira, who became famous under the appellation of Bhoja.

तेषां वंशे सुजन्मा क्रमनिहितपदे
धाम्नि वज्रेषु घोरं
रामं पौलस्त्यहिंस्रं क्षतविहृतिसमि
कर्म्म चक्रे पलाशैः
श्लाध्य—
स्तस्यानुजोसौ मघवमघमुषौ
मेघनादस्य संख्ये
सौमित्रिस्तीव्रदण्डः प्रतिहरणविधेर्यः
प्रतीहार आसीत् । 3
तद्वनशे प्रतिहार के तन भृति
त्रैलोक रक्षास्पदेः (?) ।।

Sculptures with Inscription

Besides, a few sculptures were also found with inscriptions engraved on the pedestals. Many of them are stray finds without any corresponding continuity to trace out further details.

An inscription found in a step-well at Bhātunda[18] (District Jodhpur) opens with a verse in praise of Rama of Raghu's lineage. It bears the date *saṁvat* 1102 and speaks of the Paramāra prince Pūrnapāla as then reigning the *Arbudamandala* (territory round about *Ābu*). It then says that at Bhūmdipadra (Bhātund) certain Brahmanas perceiving the vacuity of life made some contribution and constructed the work of charity.

An independent sculpture of Hanuman was found being worshipped adjacent to the main temple (Nīlakantha Mahādeva) at Arthuna in District Banswara,[19] bears an inscription on the pedestal below in V. S. 1165 (1108 A.D.). It is a loose sculpture which does not form part of the temple but it could be possible that it was brought and fixed inside the *garba-grha* since the *lalāta bimba* bears the carving of miniature Lakulīsa. It belongs to the reign of Paramāra ruler Vijaya Raja.

Another image of Hanuman of ponderous proportion has been installed in a pedestal which bears an inscription dated V.S. 1355 at Asava,[20] District Sirohi which is still under worship.

The earliest evidence in epigraphical records reveal the epical narrative merging into folk literature and later it is evident that even the royalty taking their pedigree to trace their lineage to the illustrious Solar race. The paucity of artistic evidence is to be carefully studied with the background of known historical development that becomes dominant in a few cultural centres getting into prominence as capital cities of art activity patronised by the royalty of the times.

Early Art-History of North & West Rajasthan and its Bearing on its Regional Development

In order to understand this aspect of art activity and the cultural tradition a historical review of the contemporary art-history of the times is essential. The early history of Western

India and its neighbourhood is dominated by the dynasty of Gūrjara—Pratīhāras who ruled for about three centuries, in the area west of Aravallis.

Many ancient cities possibly under the Gūrjara-Pratīhāra kingdom and smaller Rajpur powers arose in the wake of political and cultural development of north Rajasthan. Osian (Ukesia), Mandor (already mentioned), Jalor (Jabalapura), Badoli, Menal (Mahānāla), Bijolia (Vindhya Vallika) Chitorgarh (Chitrakūta) Nagda (Nagahrada), Kiradu (Kīratkūpa), Chandrawati are some. There are other places in Gujarat in which Rajasthan art-traditions were imbibed and disseminated, such as at Roda, near Himmatnagar and Shāmalaji (Gadādhara Kshetra) near Bhiloda. It will be a formal cultural fact, reasonable to evaluate that the local artisans responded to the cultural traditions and impulses that were derived from the post-Gupta and southern or Dakshina influences and re-acted to it in a comparable manner particularly where the raw material for sculpture is similar such as sand-stone and schist. It is to be mentioned in regard to the continuity of the artistic traditions that 'condensed plasticity, concentrated roundness and terseness of treatment which are Gupta traits would seem to characterise the sculptures of this period *viz.*, the seventh to the eighth and early part of the ninth century A.D. in Rajasthan and Malwa. The later products on the other hand have relatively larger forms, firmer outlines and lightness of modelling.'[21]

Against this background is to be viewed some of the artistic elements of the Rajasthan temples. One of the cultural traits include the theme of the epical narrative panels representing carvings in miniature and not un-often in sequence of the story of Rama and *līlas* of Krishna. It is quite possible that the epic narrative of Rama and Krishna had always an universal appeal and would have afforded an opportunity to the sculptors as much similar to the poets' capacities, the range of variety of their theme to be carved.

Of the many temples in which the Ramakatha is represented, three of them are to be mentioned as of importance to emphasise more than one fact. The narrative panels are found in an order of episodes, though not arranged sequence-wise. A semblance of continuity could be traced out of particular events. In terms of chronological range, they have a wider span from about the ninth to the fourteenth-fifteenth century A.D. Most of the panels are found represented below the *gangha* niches in a clock-wise form in small friezes of inconspicuous size. There are no particular reasons to emphasise any episode of specific importance as many of the episodes are of the known and familiar ones. A notable fact that has to be emphasised viz., that the epical narrative has come to stay in the composition of the architectural development of the temples as a minor theme in a total composition as a horizontal feature depicted in the temples of south-west, north and central Rajasthan.

Kekind Temple, District Nagaur

The ancient temple at Kekinda[22] (Kishkindha), modern Jasnagar, in District Nagaur is dedicated to Nīlakanteswara. The temple faces east and consists of a hall, shrine and three porches. The niches are well carved and at bottom of side pilasters are the images of Ganga and Yamuna. In addition to the *dikpālas* the *saptamātrikas* are also carved. Other deities include representation of Narasiṃha on the north and dancing Siva on the west. Four inscriptions were found in the pillars of *Sabhāmandapa* bearing dates *saṁvat* 1176, 1178, 1200 and 1224, of which the last two mention the name of the Lord of the temple Guneśwara as well.

The domical roofed *sabhāmandapa* has been found carved with some of the familiar Ramayana scenes. The typical representations include the fighting scenes. Hanuman lifting the mountain with his hands raised above is found depicted at many places. Monkeys were represented in various postures—standing in rows, at a distance or in the process of movement. Among them is one, which representing with all humility stands with hands folded possibly again Hanuman. Lord Rama is seen depicted in a few places emphasising the narrative episodes. At one place he is standing near his bird friend Jatāyu ; of distinct significance is the typical iconic features of Lord Rama, two-handed with bow in one and arrow in another. The fight between Sugrīva and Vāli is another episode that is complete and vivid in portraiture. At the far end of the scene is Lord Rama stretching his bow and arrow. Another scene is the realistic depiction of the golden deer (*suvarna* *mṛga*), but aloof, possibly recalling the Ramayana episode of Marīcha. A monkey who has brought the mountain is depicted in a joyous, but tense mood to hand over the burdern to some one else seated below. This is again a continuation of the same narrative of bringing the *Sañjeevinī* to revive the unconscious Lakshmana.[23]

The depiction of the narratives is too small as to reveal many other features, but the episodes are imbued with instant poise selected for the very reason of the change in historical sequence of the Ramakatha.

Group of Temples, Kiradu, District Barmer

At Kirādu (ancient Kīratkūpa) situated 24 km. north-west of Barmer is another group of temple complexes which reveal some of the important episodes of Ramakatha boldly depicted on the outer walls of temples. The group consists of about a dozen dilapidated temples around a huge ancient township, presently in ruins, built during the late tenth to the twelfth century A.D. Five of these religious edifices remain in a somewhat satisfactory position and throw a flood of light on the contemporary art and architecture of Western India.

More prominent and largest of all the Kīradu temples is a Saiva structure known as Somesvara temple. It consists of the usual components of a developed temple comprising of *pāncharatha* sanctum, vestibule, assembly hall and porch, but in part is accentuated and ornamented in the typical developed style of Rajasthan. All the projections of the wall carry figures and rest on a sculptured frieze. The socle moulding of the sanctum include elephant, horse and human band. The *sikhara* is of the clustered type. The hall is a magnificient structure with an octagonal arrangement of pillars tastefully ornamented. On the outside walls of the porch of the temple have been incised three inscriptions, most significant being the one of the *saṁvat* 1218 and 1235.

On the outer portion of this temple of the sanctum has been found carved a series of narrative episodes of Ramakatha. In addition, another dominating scene is the representation of *Krishnalīla* scenes running in string courses of friezes below the main *Jangha* frame.

The narratives are very much forceful and the volatile nature of the scenes create an illusion of fast movement of melodrama of the story depicted.

Sugrīva and Vāli are ensconsed in fighting and the scene is a realistic portrayal of *dvandva-yuddha.*

The monkeys are forcefully busy without minding the travails of lifting huge stones for building *Setubandha* across the sea. The poise of the scene is magnified by the enormous size of the stones which are huge and big in proportion to the suave monkeys. They lift either in single, pairs or more, with both hands and deposit them in a continuity of raised stone bridge.

This scene is again narrated with a sense to proportions in another Siva temple (No. 1).

The forlorn Sita seated desolate below the Aśoka tree in Aśoka-vana in Lanka nearby which is represented an attendant, and the difference in depiction itself is quite characteristic. On the tree above a small frail looking Lord Hanuman gives credence to the whole narrative.

To the south is the Siva temple No. 1 in which are found depicted scenes from Ramakatha. Foremost among them are the figures of a monkey, monkeys lifting the stones, etc.

Closely connected is a scene which is quite reminiscent of *Guru Upadesa.* Many monkeys are in seated posture seldom characteristic of them hearing with rapt attention the words of Lord Rama and Lakshmana-possibly connected with *setubandha* or before the war with Ravana at Lanka. Another narrative panel is that of Lakshmana lying unconscious on the ground hit by the *sakti* of Meghanada, the head of the former is placed on the right thigh of his elder brother (Rama) whose face indicates signs of anxiety and grief. In front of Lord Rama are seen groups of monkeys equally sad-faced—a composition of pose that lends realism to the whole theme.

Hanuman in his search of medicinal herbs grabs and uplifts the whole mountain.

A door jamb at Kirādu datable to the thirteenth century A.D. depicting a two-handed Rama (holding bow in one and arrow in another), figures among other incarnations of Vishnu, thus indicating that by this time Rama has been deified as an *avatāra* of Vishnu.

Sas-Bahu Temple, Nagda, District Udaipur

The twin temples of Sas and Bahu at Nagda, ancient Nagahrada situated about 21 km. from Udaipur is another complex group wherein many scenes of Ramakatha are found depicted.[24] It is supposed that these two temples are dedicated to the Vaishnava pantheon and suggested to be devoted to Krishna and Balarama. Both the temples show a fairly evolved style prone to profuse ornamentation. The temples are entered through a *makara torana*. While the larger temple is surrounded by ten subsidiary shrines, the smaller one is of the *pañchāyatana* plan. The *sikhara* is of brick work which, though ruined shows a cluster of minor turrets. The transepts of the closed hall and the interior as well as the exterior of the porch are elaborately carved with relief sculptures, and decorative designs in contrast to the plain walls of the sanctum and vestibule. The pillars, ceilings, architraves and door-frames are of a highly developed design and have been lavishly ornamented. In the back portion of both these temples Yoganārāyana Vishnu figures in the principal niche whereas the plough-bearer Baladeva appears above the niches. An inscription of *Vikrama* era 718 (681 A.D.)[25] discovered here invokes Vishnu and Krishna addressed as Hari and Sauri and later on refer to the construction of a temple of Vishnu (*Kaitabha-ripu*) in order to cross the sea of worldly existence.

The depiction of the Ramayana scenes are found on the inner side of the *Ghādya* roof (projected roof) from the outer to the inner side encompassed within two bands of decorative vegetal scrolls are indeed some of the refined carvings so far known of the epic theme in Rajasthan temples. The finer texture of the material carved out of granite, dictated a more tender care for detail than the buff and red sand-stone of Rajasthan. Obviously the architecture of the whole temple has not yet become sculpture for the walls are left plain except the lower mouldings set in the reliefs.

of animal and human worlds above which raise the main niches with bigger carvings.

There is no planned placement of the figural composition of the Ramayana themes as they were more framed to adjust to the architectural details. An ordered formula however is to be emphasised in narration from left to right.

Many of the scenes represent the familiar themes that have been the choice of the artists in the depiction ; a few of which are fresh ones that is represented for the first time.

The scenes are visualised not in a connected sequence, since panels have been separated by pillar struts or in the form of small panels with motif of river/sea revealed by various acquatic animals, etc. The scenes are not continuous; hence there is lack of cogency that is difficult to explain ; many domestic scenes are depicted in-between the Ramayana panels that add more refined taste to the whole group composition.

Below a tree stands a deer ; on its right is depicted a seated lady possibly Sita and a person who is defaced and not clear. On the right side is seated a male figure holding a bow and arrow, this seems to be Lakshmana. The next panel depicts a defaced deer already dead ; below it seems to be Rama standing holding bow and arrow, the tip of the arrow pierced to the body of the deer. On the right side of the dead deer stands a man with folded hands and further right is a person depicted wearing *dhoti* and holding bow and arrow.

The next is a spirited scene in which Vāli and Sugrīvā are fighting. To the right of Vāli is seen Rama aiming an arrow. Surrounding the scene are seen a cluster of monkeys anxiously waiting with bated breath. This scene is depicted in a series of a continuous panel in another composition. Sugrīvā meets Lord Rama and has discussion. Vāli and Sugrīvā involved in combat ; to the right of Vāli is Lord Rama aiming an arrow. The next scene depicts a dead Vāli lying prostrate. Sugrīva with his consort seated over a throne and blessed possibly indicate the auspicious occasion of coronation of Sugrīva now that his rival and elder brother Vāli is dead. A scene indicates seated Sugrīva and his consort (?) perfomed the ritual ceremony of coronation. A human figure holds a *kalaśa* to the right of Sugrīva and two monkeys to the right in similar posture. Afterwards comes a scene of monkeys proceeding in a procession, many of them climbing the trees possibly indicating the town of Kishkindha.

A series of panels depicts monkeys in various postures centred amidst the figures of Rama and Lakshmana shown on a pedestal below a tree.

A profile of Ravana's portrait is the next theme. He wields a sword, his three heads are visible. A beautiful palace composition is indicated interspersed by a series of walls. On the right side above the palace terrace is seen a monkey knee-bent speedily yet facilely moving up. Looking at him in panicky terror are the night guards of the city of Lanka possibly reporting to the Chief of the guards who is also further flanked by many other sturdy guards wielding swords ready to take orders for action. The sensitive scene is clearly visualised by the poise to take action at the lonely hour when peace and tranquility is disturbed by a bold monkey causing disturbance to the city of Lanka.

A figural composition represents a palatial building at least two-storeys visible, the lower storey below which is shown a lady possibly Sita seated and a monkey slowly yet cautiously moving above. The two-storeyed building surmounted by an *amalaka* and *kalasa* ; among them merlon designs are also distinct.

A very dignified scene un-connected with others in this sequence is to be mentioned. Flanked by an elephant on the move and pillar strut to the right are carved two figures standing, holding bow and arrow representing Lord Rama and Lakshmana. The features are quite distinctly carved and the royal dignity and majesticity of the stance add lusture and poise to this unique group composition.

Many of the other scenes depicted in these panels are numerous to mention ; some of which are yet to be identified. The octagonal pillars of the *mandapa* of the temple have also been carved with various Ramayana scenes of which some are notable. One of them represents Jatayū in death bed flanked by Lord Rama and Lakshmana anxiously hearing the vivid narrative of the incident of Sita having been carried away by Ravana. The tall figures of Rama and Lakshmana, their very posture is vivid in portraiture. The next scene represents the unconscious Lakshmana lying in the lap of Lord Rama, one hand stretched above held by his elder brother and the other loose down touching the ground. The solemn, yet dignified face of Rama in this critical scene and the terror stricken weeping monkeys add a tragic note to the whole composition. Adjacent to this scene is the fastly returning Hanuman with the huge *sanjeevini* mountain and the medicinal herbs and the awakening of Lakshmana from his unconscious state.

A scene is represented with the demon killing many monkeys together and gulping them in his wide-open mouth causing terror and destruction ; in another he is seen uprooting and lifting huge trees and many monkeys running helter-skelter and in panic possibly representing Kumbakarna in action, in a battle scene.

The richness of the depiction of Ramayana scenes in the twin temple is unparalleled. However, representation of scenes gives a clear idea as to the existence of a valid cultural stream represented by narrative themes conceptualised in common parlance.

Other Ramayana Scenes from Temple sites and Environs in Rajasthan

Many sculptures were found from many temple sites revealing evidence of Ramakatha and the epic theme represented in panel sculptures rather than in friezes. Some of them are found at sites far away and sporadic in nature and it is rather difficult to place them in proper historical perspective.

An early panel represents Siva-Parvati in the upper half and Ravana in the remaining half enclosed between two pillars. It appears to have formed part of niche decorating the outer side of *garbha-griha* of a temple.[26] Ravana's vain attempt to lift the Kailasa mountain is evidenced by all the ten heads in a most pensive mood exhibiting pain and sorrowful anger. In contrast, Lord Siva four handed is shown in a mood of philosophic contemplation radiating peace all around and to his left is Parvati, two-handed who is seated too close touching the lap of her Lord. Th entire scene is one of placating safety and security turning into quiet joy all around and reposing confidence of eternal kind that radiates an atmosphere of bliss and happiness. The whole sequence and idea reveal a feature of iconographic depiction that forecast a well-developed theme of Ramakatha.

Some of the other episodes of the legend are also fairly well represented in the temple art of the ninth and tenth centuries A.D. The region of Dhaulpur (District Bharatpur) has revealed a number of sculptures depicting Ramayana scenes. At Mauhari a moving portrayal of *agni-pariksha* exhibits Lord Rama holding bow and arrow ; by the side stands Hanuman in *anjali mudra*. Near the temple of Nilakantha Bhuvaneswara were found carved episodes of Sita-*Swayamvara*. Nearby a cluster of monkeys is represented. Another is an early representation of King Dasaratha with his youngest consort Kaikeyi.[27]

An unique episode has been represented in a panel from a temple at Mirpur, District Sirohi. It is a narrative of a scene which is quite a realistic version revealed to his wife Kausalya by King Dasaratha. Feeling extremely remorseful due to the separation of his son Rama and on his death-bed he remembered something that has happened long ago representing the fruit of one's action which one cannot escape and has to be endured due to the sins one has committed in his lifetime. He narrates, how when he was young he used to hunt in the forest situated on the banks of Sarayu, of his aiming an arrow and killing a *munikumāra* who has come to fetch water in a pitcher for his blind parents who were in the nearby hermitage and the consequent curse of the *muni*. The scene depicted includes a forest-scene, bushes and jungly trees and wild animal, the *munikumāra* placing the carriage (in the form of a swing carried balancing on shoulder) near the hermitage, approaching the pond with a pitcher to fetch water for his blind parents, while simultaneously King Dasaratha aiming an arrow assuming the gurgling sound of water-fetching to be that of an elephant drinking water. The water portion is indicated by fishes. This represenation found in a panel of other narrative friezes in a *pitha* of the temple possibly ran as a string-course all around.

At Kheda, ancient Ksirapura, 8 km. from Balotra, District Jodhpur, has yielded an image of Lord Rama, two-handed with bow in one hand and arrow in another. It stands in front of Ranchodji temple. Moreover Lord Rama has also been depicted in the galaxy of various incarnations of Vishnu.

Hanuman Sculptures from Rajasthan

A reference could also be made of a number of independent sculptures of Hanuman, the first and foremost devotee of Lord Rama.[28] Many sculptures were found depicted during the Pratīhāra period. An early sculpture from 'Chitorgarh depicts Hanuman with right hand raised above and the left placed on the thigh. It is dated in the eighth century A.D. Two more sculptures of the Gūrjara-Pratīhāra times are presently at the Mathura Museum and at the Indian Museum, Calcutta. He stands on a prostrate female figure identified as the goddess of Lanka (*Lankā-Devi*). He is shown with his right hand lifting the mountain. At Juna-Khera in Jodhpur a temple of Hanuman is considered to be one of earliest of its kind dedicated to him. Another one is also reported at Nadol. A five-faced Hanuman is found carved in the living rock on one side of Jodhpur Fort. Now Hanuman is worshipped as a popular deity in most of the villages of Rajasthan.[29]

Discussions and Conclusion

The early origins of both the literary and artistic development of the legend of Ramakatha and art theme had their manifestations crystallised elsewhere ; the background survey of it reveals the formative features in the land of Madhyadesa. The carvings of the themes are made in bold reliefs representing independent sculptures to be placed on the niches of the main *jangha* frame. The entire sequence of the narrative forms part of an episode which represents a well-known theme in Ramakatha. The idea is quite effortlessly revealed in the compositions that have some connected cogency which could be placed in historical order.

But the organised manner of depicting details and the composition of the themes infuse in them a sense of spiritual reverence as they were independent sculptures meant to occupy the prominent portion of the temples. Hence in the early stages of iconic development ideas were represented in the form of story-telling which is simple and realistic to convey the theme.

The widespread nature of their occurrence in Madhyadeśa in temples occupying prominent places of worship indicates that the literary background has assumed enough proportions as to be popular, yet sacred theme to be represented in the religious edifices. The best among them are found to be much prevalent, especially during the Gupta period in northern India.

What is more interesting is the early mention of the exploits of Rama and his illustrious qualities to be referred and emulated in the epigraphical records of the royal patrons of Western India is a historical fact worthy of mention. The royal masters allude to the lineage of Rama and his valour and trace out their royal pedigree to the Solar race. The records recall the good human qualities of Rama as an obedient son, a devoted husband, Lakshmana as a constant associate of his elder brother at all times, a loving and affectionate wife such as Sita and indeed the glorious exploits and valour of both Rama and Lakshmana were extolled as hall-mark of human virtues to be followed and emulated. It is quite relevant to emphasize that the main theme of Ramakatha has already taken root both in popular parlance as well as in the art of the times in Madhyadeśa, its spread in literary form at other places possibly took some time, the details of which are yet to be clearly revealed further.

The artistic creations in the wake of literary theme in the temple art in Western India does not appear earlier to eighth century A.D. Present information could not furnish earlier evidence. Even though the epic theme finds a place in the temple art of Western India the narrative panels were introduced in small proportions and only during the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D. does the scenes find a place as friezes in the temple art.

A notable feature of this theme has to be emphasised. In the course of the development of temple architecture the very fact of its depiction in major group of temples such as at Kiradu, Kekind, Nagda clearly reveal that the epic has taken strong root as to be emphasised in artistic form in consonance with the development of the literary ideas that is fastly spreading in Western India during this period. These art-details were represented such as the various forms of Siva and Vishnu, the composite forms of Harihara, Sūryanārāyana, Maheśa, Matrka also include the epic narrative in the architectural components of temple art. Hence the epic theme finds a place in equal proportions to the other main art and iconic elements which themselves reveal the spread of the *Bhakti* cult, and the narrative seems to have taken a deep root in the minds of the people.

There is no order in the placement of the theme in the architectural frame of the temple, since the panels were found in small friezes, or as large carvings above in ceilings of the *mandapa*, in projected roofs, etc. Possibly the artists were able to infuse balance in the depiction of the narrative panels which itself is the reason why the story aspect is not continuous. Many scenes depicted are quite new especially the fight between Sugrīva and Vāli, Lanka-*dahana* by Hanuman, the parting episode of Jatāyu, different depictions of Rama and Lakshmana, etc. These new themes reveal that there is a consistent development of the literary aspect of Ramakatha that was reflected in art-form. It is enough to emphasize that their placement in the temple art was more in the form of an effective story to convey some aspect of human values for which the *katha* was so famous.

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NOTES ON THE EMPEROR AKBAR'S MANUSCRIPT OF THE PERSIAN RAMAYANA

A. K. DAS

THE greatest treasures of the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur are the magnificent illustrated manuscripts of the *Razmnama* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the Persian translation of the Hindu twin epics the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, specially prepared for the Mughal emperor Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar (1556-1605). The *Razmnama* is divided into four separate volumes and illustrated with 168 miniatures while the single-volume *Rāmāyaṇa* has 176 miniatures. Prepared between 1583/4 and 1588 A.D. these 344 illustrations definitely occupy a very important place in the history and development of Mughal painting. All the essential traits and characteristics apparent in the poetical and historical paintings produced by the Akbari masters at Lahore and Agra are displayed in these paintings, making them indispensable to the students of Indian art history.

The *Razmnama* was displayed in the 'Jeypore Memorial Exhibition' in 1883 and nearly all the miniatures were reproduced photographically by Col. Thomas Holbein Hendley in the fourth volume of the *Memorials of Jeypore Exhibition*, 1883, published in a luxurious format for private distribution by the Maharaja in 1884. Hendley's volume on the *Razmnama* is, in fact, the first major publication on any Mughal manuscript. It is rather ironical that the companion volume of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, prepared for the use of the same imperial patron and preserved in the same collection, has remained almost totally unknown to the scholarly world ! It was displayed in the old Jaipur Pothikhana and later on in the Art Gallery of the City Palace Museum for some years, but very few scholars have actually seen this remarkable work and none of its 176 miniatures has ever been published. Only its existence is recorded in some recent papers by Robert Skelton, S. C. Welch, Anand Krishna, etc.

The miniatures of the *Ramayana* were produced in the same grand scale and richness as those of the *Razmnama*. The painters were mostly identical with the exception of two leading masters : Daswant and Muhammad Sharif. The former became mentally unstable and committed suicide in 1584, much before the *Razmnama* project was over, and the latter no longer worked as a regular painter as he climbed up on the social ladder in Prince Salim's entourage. Though some painters were introduced in the *Ramayana*, its miniatures essentially belong to the same style, same oeuvre, and same innovative tradition developed and perfected by the leading members of Emperor Akbar's painting atelier. It is imperative now to bring these superlative examples of Mughal painting to the notice of serious students of Mughal art and *Ramayana* study.

The *Ramayana* manuscript was produced in a grand manner with 365 folios each measuring 41.2 mm by 27.7 mm, interspersed with 176 full-page miniatures illustrating important events described in the book. The text is exquisitively calligraphed in elegant Nasta'lig script within a margined area of 26.3 mm. by 16.1 mm. As the name of the calligrapher is not mentioned in the colophon, we leave it to the calligraphic experts to try to identify him from his style of writing. The folios are made of thick glazed cream-coloured Daulatabadi paper. The opening folios are richly illuminated with finely designed head pieces in two tones of blue, two tones of mauve, green, black, red, orange-yellow, white, and gold. The margins are decorated with delicate designs of creepers, leaves and flowers painted in various shades of gold and other colours. The interline spaces of these two folios are filled with minute designs of twigs, buds and flowers in gold and colours.

The text area is enclosed by blue, gold, brick-red and green, the latter greatly weakening, sometimes even damaging the paper. There are sixteen lines of text in the opening pages, while the average page contains twenty five lines. The paintings invariably occupy space much larger than the written surface, in some examples the entire page. The original leather bindings are lost, only their impressions are still faintly visible on the *post in* papers at either end. The manuscript is now casually bound in boards covered with striped Gujarati *mashru* cloth. The general state of preservation of the work is satisfactory. Only some folios in the beginning and end have become detached. The edges of the folios are gilt and gauffered.

According to the colophon, the manuscript was completed on 28 Zilhijja, AH 997, corresponding to November 1588 A.D. Its royal association is made certain by an autograph note in Nur-ud-din Jahangir's (1605-1607) handwriting on the reverse of the opening folio which reads :

> 'On the 5th Azar, Julus 1, the book was entered in the *Kutabkhana* on the royal orders of His Majesty the Emperor, Nur-ud-din Jahangir, son of Akbar Badshah Ghazi, in the year 1013 Hijra (1605 A.D.). This book *Ramayana* is one of the celebrated works of the Hindus ; my father ordered that its translation may be rendered into Persian. It contains unique and strange stories which are not believable, particularly in chapters three and five.'

At the bottom of page there are four seal impressions, one from the reign of Shah Jehan (1628-1658), two from the reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707), while the fourth one is smudged and illegible. Additional inscribed notes have been made illegible by a thick layer of gold over painting. Librarians' notes dated in the 26th *julus* of Shah Jahan (1654), 1069 Hijra (1658) and in the 3rd *julus* of Aurangzeb (1661) have also been appended. Similar Librarians' notes and seal impressions appearing on the end papers provide us with valuable information on the custody, movement, inspection and royal viewing and occasional repairing of the manuscript. From a three line note written by Muhammad Ali Shah Jahani we come to know that on the 15th Muharram in the 24th regnal year of Shah Jahan (i.e. 1652), the manuscript was repaired by patching strips of paper on some folios. This obviously implies that the manuscript was extensively handled. It appears from some other notes that it was carried from place to place as an integral part of the Mughal private library and the emperors consulted it while in station at Lahore, Srinagar, Agra, etc. Names of officials holding charge of the imperial library at different times are also mentioned in these notes.

II

Students of Mughal history are well aware of Akbar's desire to have authentic Persian translation of important Hindu religious works, for his keen interest in other religions and to the beliefs and faiths of his Hindu subjects.

In the words of Abu'l Fazl :

> ' Having observed the fanatical hatred prevailing between Hindus and Musalmans, and convinced that it arose only from their mutual ignorance, the enlightened monarch (Akbar) wished to dispel the same by rendering the books of the former accessible to the latter. He selected, in the first instance, the *Mahabharata* as the most comprehensive and that which enjoyed the highest authority and ordered it to be translated by competent and impartial men of both nations. '

The testimony of Abdu'l Qadir Bada'oni regarding Akbar's momentous decision is even more illuminating :

> ' When he had had the *Shahnamah*, and the story of Amir Hamzah, in seventeen volumes transcribed in fifteen years, and had spent much gold in illuminating it, he also heard the story of Abu Muslim and the *Jami-il-hikayat* repeated, and it suddenly came into his mind that most of these books were nothing but poetry and fiction : but that, since they were first related in a lucky hour, and when their star was in the act of passing over the sky, they obtained great fame. But now he ordered those Hindu books, which holy and staid sages had written, and were all clear and convincing proofs, and which were the very pivot on which all their religion, and faith, and holiness turned, to be translated from the Indian (Hindi) into the Persian language, and thought to himself, 'why should I not have them done in my name ? ' . . .

As a result of this decision the first book that was taken up for translation was the great epic of the Hindus, the *Mahabharata*. The task was entrusted in A.H. 990 (1582 A.D.) to Naqib Khan, and subsequently to ' Abdu'l Qadir Bada'oni, Mulla Sheri and Sultan Hajji Thanesari. The translation was completed in eighteen months in A.H. 992 (September 1584 A.D.), after which Poet Laureate Shaikh Faizi revised the text and put it into elegant form. The Emperor's friend and counsellor Abu'l Fazl added a long preface and the work was completed in 995/1587 by one of the most celebrated calligraphers and embellished with sumptuous pictures before it was presented to the Emperor. The nobles were ordered to get copies of the book prepared for their personal use. After satisfactory completion of the translation of the *Mahabharata*, Akbar commanded Bada'oni to translate the *Ramayana*. It appears from Bada'oni's notes that he was given the sole responsibility of translating the whole of the *Ramayana*. He was, however, assisted by a team of scholars knowledgeable in Sanskrit and Persian. Though Bada'oni initially declared it to be a superior composition to the *Mahabharata*, his strong anti-Hindu bias made him to despise himself repeatedly for his 'unholy' charge! However, Bada'oni accomplished his task and wrote :

> 'In the month Jamada'l-Awwal of the year nine hundred and ninety seven I finished the translation of the *Ramayana* which had taken me four years. I wrote it all in couplets and brought it to the Emperor. When I wrote at the end of it the couplet :
>
> > 'We have written a story, who will bring it to the Emperor ?
> >
> > We have burnt our soul, who will bring it to the Beloved ?'

It was much admired. The Emperor asked me 'How many sheets does it contain ?' I answered, 'The first time, when written concisely it reached nearly 70 sheets, but the second time, when written more at length it was 120 sheets'. He commanded me to write a preface to it after the manner of authors. But since it was no such great recovery from my former falling out of favour, and a *Khutbah* would have to be written without praising God and the Prophet, I dissimulated. . . !'

The Jaipur copy was completed on 28 Zilhijja, A. H. 997 (November,1588 A.D.), that is, within several months of Bada'oni's submission of the translation. It seems, therefore, that the calligraphers and painters started to work almost immediately after the translator proceeded with his task. As the illustration of the *Razmnama* was completed in about 995 A.H. (beginning of 1585 A.D.), the *Ramayana* was taken up immediately afterwards and took slightly more than two years to complete.

III

The Jaipur *Ramayana* contains 176 illustrations, eight more than the much larger text of the *Razmnama.* The miniatures are of superb quality and clearly follow the high standard of drawing, composition, colour-rendering and individual details noticed in the latter work. In the *Ramayana* the atmosphere is often more relaxed and less dramatic than the tense and supercharged pictures of the *Razmnama.* As in the latter, panels of text occupy parts of the miniatures, but here these are shorter and in many examples these act merely as labels. In some cases the text panel encroaches upon the illustrated page, and conversely, in some interesting examples the text panels occupy fairly large portions of the folio. In many paintings the text panels help the painters to solve technical problems encountered while dealing with large, crowded and complicated compositions. The problem of indicating depth and foreshortening have thus been tackled cleverly. The miniatures were prepared by a large number of painters whose names are noted by the library clerk in red ink on the lower margin, excepting in AG 1901, 1902, 1903, 1911, 1912 where the painters have signed on the painting itself. Five miniatures (AG 1864, 1975, 1976, 1999, 2000) in the middle of the Ms. and the last seven miniatures (AG 2020-2026) do not bear any attribution.

Generally two painters were responsible for each miniature, one drawing the out line (*tarah*) and the other finishing it by application of colour (*'amal*). In some pages only one name is mentioned who presumably prepared the picture from sketching to finishing. There are instances where the same painter is mentioned twice as responsible for drawing and colour-rendering. The painters working in this Mss. along with the number of their works are : Basawan (14), Banwari (3), Banwari/Banwarli Kalan (5), Banwari Khord (2), Bhagwan (6), Bhavani (7), Bhavani Kalan (2), Bhaura (8), Chatar (1), Chatermuni (6), Chaturbhuj (3), Chaiti (1), Devji Gujarai (2), Dhavan (1), Dhanu/Dhanun (8), Dharmadas (3), Ghulam'Ali (2), Hussain Naqqas (2), Ibrahim (1), Isar (2), Jagan/

Jagna (13), Jagjivan (6), Kesav (12), Kesav Kalan (24), Kesav Khord (12), Kesav Gujarati (3), Kanha (5), Karam Chand (2), Khem Karan (1), Lal (37), Madhav Kalan (7), Madhav Khord (1), Madhav Chela (1), Mando (4), Mando Firangi (2), Mando Kalan (2), Mani (2), Mahesh (8), Megh (1), Meghji Gujarati (1), Mukund (5), Miskin/Mishkina (14), Nand/Nanda (2), Nand Gwaliary (1), Nama (1), Nanha (1), Narayan (4), Paras (6), Paramjew Gujarati (1), Ramdas (6), Sankar (4), Sanwala/Sanwali (2), Sarwan (3), Surji Gujarati (5), Tara (3), Tara Kalan (1), Tulsi (4), Tulsi Kalan (7), Tulsi Khord (2). From the above list it appears that in several cases there were more than one painter bearing same name who have been identified by the words *Kalan* (senior) and *Khord* (junior), e.g., Banwari Kalan and Banwari Khord, Kesav Kalan and Khord, Madhav Kalan and Khord, and Tulsi Kalan and Khord. In the pictures signed by Banwari, Kesav, Madhav and Tulsi without specifying the appellations, it is difficult to determine their true identity. As J. V. S. Wilkinson observed long ago, 'the difficulty of identifying the work of any given artist with certainty is increased from the painters' habit of adopting different styles, or rather, perhaps, of subordinating their individuality to the requirements of the patron and the studio'. In addition to this, almost all the miniatures of the Jaipur *Ramayana* are joint works. Similarly it is difficult to say whether Chatar and Chattarmuni, Kesav and Kesav Gujarati, Megh and Meghji Gujarati, Nand and Nand Gwaliari, Surji Gujarati and Surya Gujarati and Tara and Tara Kalan refer to same individuals or two separate individuals. Nanha and Nana, Sanwala and Sanwali have, however, been accepted as same individuals in the same manner as Banwari and Banwali, Dhanu and Dhanun, and Mishkin and Mishkina. In the Victoria and Albert Museum fragment of the *Babarnama* there are three paintings signed by Nand, son of Ramdas; therefore, Nand Gwaliari and Nand may not denote the same individual.

Amongst the painters working in this manuscript, Basawan, Kesav, La'l, Mukund, Mishkin, Madhav, Jagan, Mahesh, Khem Karan, Tara Sanwala, and Ramdas find mention in Abu'l Fazl's list of leading painters furnished in the *A'in-i-Akbari*. Works of painters like Mir Sayyid' 'Ali,' Abd-us-Sanad, Daswant, Farrukh Beg are not found in this Mss. as Mir Sayyid 'Ali had long ceased to be active, 'Abd-us-Samad was elevated to an administrative post at Multan, Daswant committed suicide in 1584 A.D. and Farrukh Beg, though came to the Mughal court in 1585 A.D., had not yet emerged as an accomplished master of the Akbari atelier. Another important omission is Muhammad Sharif, son of Khwaja 'Abdus-Samad, who contributed three miniatures (AG 1750, 1801 and 1804) in the *Razmnama*. Painters such as Anis, Babu, Brijthali, Farrukh Chela, Iqbal, Lallu, Mukhlis, Sarjan and Thirpal, working in the *Razmnama* are also conspicuous by their absence. A noticeable point is the presence of painters from Gujarat and Gwalior, who did not work in the *Razmnama*. Since these painters occupied important positions in the atelier working in many well-known Mss. it seems to us that these painters were recruited between 1586 and 1588 to augment the strength of the atelier. Devji Gujarati's name appears in the British Library *Babarnama*, and the Victoria and Albert Museum fragment of the *Babarnama* ; Kesav Gujarati's in the British Library *Babarnama* and the '*Iyar-i-Danish* fragment in the Chester Beatty Library ; Paramjew Gujarati's in the British Library *Babarnama* (as Pem or Prem Gujarati), and Surji or Surya Gujarati's in the British Library *Babarnama*, Khudabux Library *Khandan-i-Timuriyya*, Chester Beatty Library '*Iyar-i-Danish* and the British Library *Khamsa-i-Nizami* fragment. The last-named painter contributed one folio of the *Jami-ut-Twarikh* Mss. previously in the Demotte collection, Paris, and the *Akbarnama* portion dated 1604 A.D., in the British Library, if he is synonymous with Surdas Gujarati. His name has been variously written as Sur, Sur Gujarati, Surya Gujarati, Suraj Gujarati, Surji Gujarati and Surja Gujarati and there is no means to ascertain if all these names refer to the same individual. Nand Gwaliari was a notable painter whose works are found in the *Babarnama* Mss. of the British Library and the National Museum, Delhi, the *Khamsa-i-Nizami* of the British Library, the *Akbarnama* fragment in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the '*Iyar-i-Danish* fragment of the Chester Beatty Library, and the *Jami'-ut-Twarikh* folios in the Demotte and Pozzi collections (now dispersed). Mandu Firangi, Issar and Chaiti's names are not found in any other manuscript. One folio of *Tarikh-i-'Ālfi* fragment, formerly in the Ajit Ghosh collection, and one folio of the Khudabux Library *Khandan-i-Timurriyya* Mss. is signed by Surdas, who has designated himself as 'son of Issar'; from which it is apparent that Issar was an artist of some fame, who had a premature death. It is difficult to establish the identity of the Firangi or European painter called Mandu or Manda. Did he come from Goa on the footsteps of the first Jesuit Mission of Father Aquaviva in 1580 A.D. and stayed on in the Mughal Court ? Hussain Naqqas worked in one miniature of the Victoria and Albert Museum *Akbarnama*, and he might have drawn the beautiful marginal details in the *Baharistan* Mss. dated 1593 A.D. in the Bodleian Library. He also contributed one folio in the *Razmnama* Mss. painted in 1598 A.D., now preserved in the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery, and two miniatures of the early seventeenth century *Anwar-i-Suhaili* manuscript in the British Library where he signs his name as Ustad Husain. The earlier works of the famous natural history painter Ustad Mansur are similarly signed with the appellation Naqqas. We also know of Babu Naqqas working in the Victoria and Albert Museum *Akbarnama* who has signed in Bodleian Library *Baharistan* as Babu or Ustad Babu. Starting as illuminator or Naqqas, they excelled to become Ustad or a master painter.

IV

In illustrating the *Razmnama* and the *Ramayana* the Mughal painters faced a new challenge, as, so long they were preoccupied with subjects illustrating Persian literature or animal fables. Though a vast majority of the painters were Hindus, well versed in their epics and traditionally oriented to handle the popular myths, it was by no means an easy task for them to depict Hindu religious themes in terms of Mughal court style.

The *Ramayana* story as presented by the Akbari painters appears more like a contemporary event where the principal characters wear Mughal court costumes, use current weapons and move about in palaces and cities built more like Akbar's new capital city of Fatehpur Sikri. Interior furnishings like thrones and stables, carpets and awnings, doors and windows, glass and metalware all conform to newly developed Mughal creations. The atmosphere is more rarified and orderly than expected in the story of a noble Prince's victory over the demons, excepting in the long series of battle scenes showing fierce engagement with Rama's force of monkeys and bears, and where the pervading mood is full of tension and drama.

In the forthcoming monograph on this valuable document being published by the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum later this year the present author proposes to make a full art historical study of all the miniatures and append detailed notes on their identification. It would be sufficient to mention here, that these sumptuous illustrations prepared by an assembly of heterogenous painters for a non-Hindu patron provide us with a host of interesting details of the *Ramayana* and how it permeated through contemporary art and culture.

THE RAMAYANA THEME IN NEPALESE ART

N. R. BANERJEE

THE cult of Rama does not appear to have been a very popular one in Nepal, even though the cult of Vishnu of whom Rama was an incarnation, was popular almost from the very beginning of artistic activity in Nepal. This is reflected by the narrative scenes of the Vishnu-Vikrāntamūrti, depicting the story of the discomfiture of Vāmana going back to the fifth century, or Krishna in his victorious role of *Kaliyamardana*, and Varaha in anthropomorphic form rescuing the earth of about the same date.

The earliest inscriptional reference to a temple of Rama or of Siva linked with Rama occurs in Amsuvarma's Hadigaon inscription of the year 32 i.e. A.D. 608 or 627 B.C.[1] mentioning a temple of Rāmesvara.

The earliest inscriptional evidence indicating a fairly detailed acquaintance of Nepal with *Rāmāyaṇa* occurs in the Pasupatinath stone slab inscription of Jayadeva II, dated 159 Samvat which works out to *circa* A.D. 733. The inscription refers at once to the intense devotion of Ravana to Siva, who held him at the apex of the jewels of his crown, and traces the genealogy of the Lichchhavis. The latter, who ruled approximately from *circa* A.D. 300 to A.D. 750, are shown in the inscription to have descended of the Sun, through Brahma's grandchildren and Manu, and thereafter through Sagara, Raghu, Dilipa, Aja and Dasaratha, in succession, and eight sons and grandsons of Dasaratha, etc.[2] That the knowledge of the *Rāmāyaṇa* can only be traced to Valmiki has to be conceded, for the earliest *Rāmāyaṇa* in Nepal is the one translated in Nepali (verses) by Bhanu Bhakta Acharya (Upadhyaya), who lived between 1816 and 1868. This late event is keeping with the attitude of the Nepalese to the *Rāmāyaṇa* theme through the corridors of history.

Though apparently rather odd in the only Hindu kingdom of the world it is striking that there practically are only two or three stone sculptures of Rama in the country. One of these is represented by a sculpture of Rama fixed into the wall alongside the steps leading from Mrigasthali, lying to the east of the Pasupati temple, to the Bagmati river. The panel is more in the nature of a cult image than a narrative theme meant for the purpose of edification. This piece has been dealt with in detail by H. Goetz,[3] in his famous article on " Early Indian Sculptures from Nepal ", published in *Artibus Asiae* (18), 1955. The panel shows four figures, of which the central figure of Rama is shown in *tribhaṅga*. He is two-handed. The left hand holds a bow, and the right is extended downwards holding the gesture of gift bestowing grace (*varadamudrā*). He is flanked on his left, undoubtedly, by Sita holding a vessel in her left hand and a mirror in her right. To the right of Rama stands the figure of Lakshmana bearing the standard of Rama marked with the figure of Garuda. The figure of Garuda was devised no doubt to help identify the central figure as of Rama, as *avatāra* of Vishnu. It is therefore, not a narrative sculpture, but a representation of Rama as an incarnation of Vishnu ; and probably as a cult image. This figure is very much worn out, and it is not easy to make out all the details clearly. It seems to be later in point of time than the date of 5th century A.D. suggested by Goetz, primarily because of the elongation of the figure, and the presence of the three pointed crown of Rama. The style of delineation of the rocky background is indicative, however, of an early medieval date.

This leaves out of account the comparatively modern sculpture of Rama and Sita at the Rama-Janaki temple of Janakpur in the tarai area of Nepal.

There are apparently not many wooden sculptures of the Rama theme either known so far, with the exception of two panels one of which illustrates Ravana, on the battlefield mounted on his chariot. It shows Ravana standing in the centre of his four-wheeled chariot in the *pratyālīdha* posture, with his ten heads arranged in three rows of five at the base, four in the middle and one at the top. He has twenty hands each of which carries an *ayudha*, but the uppermost right hand brandishes overhead a double-edged sword with a midriff, and the uppermost left is holding a circular shield with four protective knobs. Behind Ravana stands an attendant wearing a Greek helmet (apparently metallic) and carrying an umbrella (*chhatra*) with three concentric tiers in receding order. In front of Ravana, on the forepart of the chariot, pulled by at least four horses (two on the left side are seen in the panel), is another attendant, also wearing a Greek helmet, carrying a standard with two triangular pennants with his right hand and a flywhisk in his left. The upper pennant of the standard bears the inscribed name of Ravana. Incidentally it may be pointed out that in Nepal the practice of labelling sculptures or narrative scenes is quite common. The purpose of a *dhvaja* is to identify the person, party or group. Here the purpose is served by the name itself. This is in contradistinction to the depiction of Garuda on the standard in the stone sculpture of Rama described earlier. The two attendant figures wear a tunic-like pleated and flowing dress, clasped at the waist by a plain belt and a coat of mail and a Greek-style helmet. Ravana wears his tunic in two pieces, with the hem of the upper part going over the flowing skirt. It is also held firmly in its place by a plain waist belt. The upper garment is further reinforced by a protective coat of mail. Ravana also wears a garland, in the manner of a *vanamālā* made of large flowers. The chariot has four solid wheels, as deduced from the two seen on one side in the panel, and the solid surface around the hub is marked symmetrically by lotus motifs for decoration. The panel is datable to the 17th century stylistically, and is now in the Bhaktapur Museum of Woodworks.

The other, an almost identical or corresponding and contemporary panel, in wood, of Vishnu is also in the Bhakatpur Museum of Woodworks. This panel too has three figures, of which the central figure is Vishnu, four handed, in *pratyālīdha* pose, holding *chakra* and *gada* in his upper hands, and *padma* and *saṅkha* in the lower hands. Vishnu seems to have a third eye in a vertical position. Garuda in the form of a bird, dressed in a coat of mail, is holding a flag staff with his left hand, and the right hand, lifted up in a striking gesture, is in the forepart of the chariot. The two pennants flutter from the flag staff which is surmounted by a *prabhā* of flames enclosing the seated figures of Garuda, in anthropomorphic form, in *añjali mudrā*. The upper pennant is inscribed with ' *Oṁ*

Śrī Vishṇu'. The rear part of the panel is marked by the umbrella bearer, wearing a coat of mail. The umbrella has three tiers, apart from the apex. The umbrella staff is held by both the hands. The wheels and horses are counterparts of the Ravana panel. The two together conjure up the battle scene between Rama and Ravana, though Rama here is deputised by Vishnu himself, no doubt on account of the inadequate popularity of Rama in Nepal. In this connection it may be added that apart from the fact that Rama is held as an incarnation of Vishnu in the *Avatara* concept, the first *śloka* of the 13th canto of *Raghuvaṁśaṁ* (of Kalidasa) mentions this pointedly in the following words '*Rāmābhidhāno Harirityuvācha*' occurring in the second line of the *śloka* in the context of Rama addressing his wife while flying over the ocean in the aerial chariot upon their return from Lanka.

It is interesting to note that the figure of Garuda in the wooden panel is used as an emblem for Vishnu in addition to the tell-tale name, pointing to the importance of the emblem serving as the *dhvaja* as contrasted with the pennants, as propounded in a forthcoming thesis by Dr. U. P. Thapliyal.

It is quite apparent that there was no representation of Rama as such, to match the figure of Ravana, and these twin panels represent Rama and Ravana, respectively, going to battle, and this phenomenon supports the opening statement about the cult of Rama not being so very popular in Nepal in the early or medieval times. It is further corroborated by the chronological gap that separates the Mrigasthali sculpture and the wooden panels of Ravana and Vishnu described earlier.

An inscripition[4] datable to the later part of the 15th century, on the basis of the names of the rulers of the time, recorded on the pedestal of an image of Vasudeva, lying in a locality called Hanumanghat, mentions the place as *Hanūtīrtha* in Bhaktapattanapura (Bhatgaon). It points to the prevalence, if not popularity, of the cult of Hanuman and, by implication, of Rama in the 15th century.

King Pratapamalla, who built the still extant Malla palace at Kathmandu and had an inscribed stone sculpture of Narasimha[5] installed in a small shrine inside the entrance to the palace complex had also a sculpture of Hanuman installed on a pedestal outside the gate, which is today popularly known as Hanuman Dhoka or Hanuman Gate. King Bhupatindra Malla of Bhaktapur too set up an image of Hanuman on the proper right of the Malatichok of his palace in A.D. 1697 (Samvat 818), with an inscription on the pedestal which descriptively reads as follows :

Oṁ pārāvāralaṅghana daśamukhasyānandāvidhvaṁsano
Laṅkādeśavidāhako, Raghupater ājñākaraḥ sarvadā I

Sītāharshapradāyako hyupavane saṁtrāsano rakshasān
pāyād bhūpapurandaram Raghukulodbhūtaṁ Hanumānayam II

It means—'let this Hanuman, who constantly carries out the orders of Rama who was the cause of the destruction of the delight of ten-headed Ravana, and a cause of torment to the demons in the Asokavana, protect King Bhupatindramalla, descended of the dynasty of Raghu '.

Alongside was erected on the left hand side of the gate an inscribed image of Narasimha of the same date.

A stone slab inscription[6] in the temple of Narayana in front of the royal palace at Patan of the year N.S. 684 (A.D. 1563), of the reign period of Vishunusimha offers a salutation to Vishnu as having put an end to the pride of Ravana, lord of Lanka in the following words :

Tubhyaṁ nātha naṃo namaḥ
surapate Laṅkeśa darpāntaka

Pasupati Vasukristhana inscription[7] of Pratapamalla, dated N. S. 770, i.e., A.D. 1649 recounts among the various exploits of the incarnation of Vishnu the slaying of Ravana by Rama for upholding his dignity.

The stone built Krishna temple at the Durbar Square of Patan constructed by King Siddhi Narasimhamalla in 1637, carries a sculpture of Rama as one of the ten *avatāras* installed in the shrine, and also carries a series of bas-relief scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* on the edge of the upper row of the roofs, while the edge of the lower roof carries similarly a series of scenes from the *Mahābhārata.* All these scenes are labelled and have a didactive value, though they are rather at a height and a bit inconvenient to gaze or to read the inscriptions without craning or straining one's neck. These serve as an open-air exhibition of the epic scenes in narrative sculpture, with labels provided.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* theme has been, however, dealt within several medieval manuscripts such as the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahīrāvaṇavadha* and *Hanumannāṭaka*, respectively.

The book cover of a manuscript of *Vishṇudharma* the 13th (dated 1220) century shows the painted scene of Rama in a *Daśāvtāara* group. Rama stands in *tribhaṅga*, next to Parasurama, holding a weapon with his right hand and a bow and arrow with the left. It is now in the National Archives at Kathmandu.[8] E. Waldschmidt[9] has drawn our attention to another book cover illustration of the *Daśāvatāra* group, showing Rama holding an arrow with the right hand and a bow with the left, wearing a three-peaked crown, in the style of painting prevalent in the Himalayan region of India (Kangra or Kulu) pointing to the obvious source of influence of the style dating back to the 18th century. Incidentally Krishna is omitted from this group, possibly because it has taken recourse to delineating the figures of Vishnu and Lakshmi within a *prabhā-maṇḍala* in the centre, and Krishna's place is taken by light-complexioned Balarama instead.

An illustrated Nepalese manuscript[10] of the 16th century, called *Kalāpustaka*, preserved in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi has several painted scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* including one of a composite deity of Hanu-Bhairava.

A Nepalese painted scroll dated A.D. 1681 in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay shows two kneeling figures of Rama and Lakshmana, respectively.

One painted Nepalese scroll at the Denver Art Museum in the United States shows the incarnations of Vishnu in two rows. The lower register in the extreme proper right of the panel shows Rama fighting with Ravana. The figure of Hanuman is also seen behind Rama.

The National Archives of Nepal has inherited from the erstwhile Bir Library at Kathmandu two manuscripts[11] in the Newari script, bearing nos. 934 and 905, respectively of the Bir

Library. The post colophon of the Kishkindha Kanda of the manuscript no. 934 bears a date, viz. 1076 samvat in the following sentence :

> *Saṁvat* 1076 *Āshāḍha vadi* 4 *Mahārājādhirājapuṇyāvaloka*
> *somavamsodbhava Garuḍadhvaja Śrīmad Gāṇgeyadeva*
> *bhujyamāna Tīrabhuktau Kalyāna-vijayarājye*
> *Nepāladesīya bhāṇḍasālika Srī Ānandadevasya krite*
> *Pāṭakāvasthita-Panditakāyastha Srī-Srī Kurasyātmaja—*
> *Srī Gopatinā likhitam.*

It means that the manuscript was written for a Nepalese official, Anandadeva, by the Kayastha Pandit Gopati, son of Sri Kura, who was a resident of Pāṭaka in the kingdom of Tīrabhukti (Tirhut) during the reign of Gangeyadeva.

The date of the manuscript as given in the post colophon is interesting. It cannot be in the Newari era. It should be in the Vikrama Samvat, in which case it can be dated to A.D. 1019. It is, therefore, an early manuscript on the theme and shows that there was knowledge about the *Rāmāyaṇa* text in general and keenness for it in Nepal as early as the 11th century A.D.

The second manuscript, on thick handmade paper, is dated to 795 in the Newari era which works out to A.D. 1674-1675. Both these manuscripts are unillustrated.

A few other representations[12] of the *Rāmāyaṇa* theme may also be mentioned. One of these is a 15th century book cover of a manuscript dated 1235 Newar Samvat in the collection of Doris Wiener in New York. It shows Rama seated with Sita on his left and Lakshmana on his right. Lakshmana is flanked by Hanuman at the extreme right and Sita is flanked by Sugriva at the extreme left. While Rama looks frontally, the other four figures look towards Rama, providing a unity to the victorial narrative.

A *Rāmāyaṇa* manuscript (Nepali) at the National Library, Kathmandu, dated to the 19th century illustrates the humiliation of Hanuman who is made to crawl as he is being led on a leash to the court of Ravana.

Two *Kalāpustakas*, one of which is in the Cambridge University and the other at the National Art Gallery, London, and are dated to the 16th century portray some *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes.

Finally, the Nautale Durbar of the Hanuman Dhoka palace depicts the *Rāmāyaṇa* theme in three registers. The scene opens with Rama, Sita and Lakshmana resting in Chitrakuta and being enticed by Maricha. The next scene shows Maricha being pursued by Rama. The third scene shows Ravana deluding Sita in the disguise of a mendicant. The following scene shows Sita seated in a chariot with Ravana, and the chariot being pursued by Jatayu. Down below is Kishkindha, were Sugriva and Hanuman are being approached by Rama and Lakshmana. The next scene shows Rama befriending Sugriva and witnessing the fight between Sugriva and Bali.

The second row begins with the lament of Tara over the dead body of Bali. It is followed by the scene of Rama and Lakshmana conferring with Sugriva and Hanuman. Next comes the scene of Hanuman flying over the sea and arriving at the Asokavana of Lanka.

The lowest register shows Hanuman in the presence of Ravana. He is then setting fire to the city of Lanka with the flames of his tail. Hanuman then takes leave of Sita, and makes over the details of his adventure and experience to Rama and Lakshmana. Here the succession of the scenes is as in a cinema and one scene is separated from another by a line drawn most naturally on the landscape.

Thus it can be seen that the theme of *Rāmāyaṇa* or even the cult image of Rama as an *avatāra* of Vishnu is not much to be met with in the early, or medieval, art of Nepal, on the basis of the evidence that is presently available, despite the fact of the capital of Rājarshi Janaka Sīradhvaja, father of Sita, being located at Janakpur, in Nepal, which is well known for its Rama-Janaki temple, and is on this account a place of pilgrimage. Not far from Janakpur is an area called Dhanusha, where the remains of a stony ridge are revered as the relics of the bow of Siva which gave way when wielded by Rama on the eve of his marriage to Sita. Nevertheless, the marriage of Sita of Janakpur and Rama of Ayodhya, as narrated in Valmiki *Rāmāyaṇa*, has brought Nepal and India socially and culturally closer and has strengthened the bonds that go back to the times before the Buddha.

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[1] R. Gnoli, *Nepalese Inscriptions in Gupta Characters*, Rome, 1956, Part I, p. 50.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 115-19.

[3] H. Goetz, 'Early Indian Sculptures from Nepal', *Artibus Asiae* (18), 1955, p. 66, Fig. 1.

[4] D. R. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, III, pp. 92-3.

[5] *Abhilekha Samgraha*, part 3, p. 26, (samvat 792, A.D. 1671).

[6] D. R. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, Part IV, pp. 21-22.

[7] *Sanskrita Sandeśa*, 1, 7, pp. 27-31.

[8] N. R. Banerjee and R. J. Thapa, *Nepalese Art*, 1960 pl. XXXV B.

[9] E. Waldschmidst *Nepal Art Treasures from the Himalayas*, Wiesbaden, 1970, Fig. 70 a.

[10] For the manuscript illustrations and book covers in the following lines. please see P. Pal, *Vaishnava Iconology of Nepal*, Calcutta, 1970 ; and *Nepalese Arts : Sculpture*, Leiden, 1978.

[11] G. C. Jhala, *The Sundara Kanda, The Fifth Book of the Valmiki Ramayana*, Baroda, 1966, pp. IX and XII of the Introduction.

[12] P. Pal, *op. cit*

THE STORY OF RAMA IN TIBET

J. W. DE JONG

THE story of Rāma is well known in Tibet and it is told in many texts. The oldest known version is found in six manuscripts from Tun-huang. Tun-huang in the north-west of China was occupied by the Tibetans during a period of about sixty years from 787 to 848. It is probably during the Tibetan occupation that this version of the story of Rāma was written in Tun-huang. It is also possible that the manuscripts containing this story could have been written in Central Tibet and brought to Tun-huang during the Tibetan occupation. The six manuscripts containing this story are all incomplete and they differ in details. The six manuscripts which are usually designated with the letters A, B, C, D, E and F can be divided into two groups. Manuscripts A, C, D, and F represent one Recension : Recension I, and manuscripts B and E another recension, Recension II. The main difference between the two Recensions is that Recension I is more detailed, containing several episodes which are missing in Recension II. Recension I is preserved almost in its entirety in manuscripts D and A which together contain 491 lines. Only a few lines are missing. The complete manuscript of Recension I must have contained almost 500 lines. The second recension is only partly preserved, mainly in manuscript E. The 276 lines of manuscript E correspond to about 340 lines of manuscripts D and A. Probably Recension II contained about 400 lines.

It is not my intention to repeat the detailed summary of the two recensions which I presented to the First International Sanskrit Conference in New Delhi in March 1972.[1] However, it is necessary to briefly sketch the main lines of the story in order to explain the relationship of the Tun-huang version with the later versions of the story of Rāma and Sītā.

The narrative begins with a description of the country of Laṅkapura situated in the midst of the ocean. It is ruled by the king of the demons, Yagśakori, who cannot be defeated by the gods. The gods request the ṛṣi Viśravas and Śrīdevī to bear a son who will be able to vanquish him. This son, Vaiśravaṇa, kills all demons but spares Malhyapanta, the son of Yagśakori. Malhyapanta plans revenge and devotes himself to serving a divine ṛṣi, a son of Brahmā, called Śvapasina or Biśurasena, to whom he offers his daughter, Mekesena. Three sons are born from this union : Daśagrīva, Udpakana (Ampakarna) and Ciriśana (Birinaśa). They obtain power over the gods from Mahādeva, and go to Laṅkapura to kill both gods and men there. In this way they avenge the death of Yagśakori for Malhyapanta. In recension II this episode is told very briefly, but in Recension I it is much more detailed. According to the latter, the three sons of Mekesena first ask Brahmā for three miraculous powers. When Brahmā refuses, they go to Mahādeva and try to propitiate him. Daśagriva even cuts off one of his ten heads as an offering. Mahādeva's wife, Upade (Upame), offers them her own miraculous power, which they reject. Upade thereupon prophesies that they will be destroyed by a woman. Then Mahādeva's minister, Prahasti, offers his miraculous power, which they likewise reject, and Prahasti prophesies that they will be destroyed by a monkey. Finally, they obtain from Mahādeva the three following powers : (1) power over the gods ; (2) the death of any being who is struck by the first arrow shot ; and (3) immortality, as long as Daśagriva's horse-head is not cut off.

After the victory of the three sons of Mekesena, the gods deliberate as to what to do against Daśagrīva and the demons. They ask Viṣṇu for help. Viṣṇu incarnates himself as Ramana, the son of Daśaratha, and his own son appears on earth as Lagśena. A daughter is born to Daśagrīva, but it is predicted that she shall cause the ruin of her father and the demons so she is placed in a copper box and committed to the waters. She is found by Indian peasants and named 'Found in the furrow' (Rol-rñed-ma). Daśaratha is wounded in a battle between the gods and the demons, and Ramana renounces the throne and Lagśana is appointed as king. Rol-rñed-ma grows up and the peasants offer her to Ramana who accepts her as his wife and gives her the name of Queen Sīta. Ramana now becomes king.

When one of Yogśakori's ministers, Marutse, prevents five hundred brahmans from obtaining a siddhi, Ramana throws a ring at Marutse and injures one of his eyes. The brahmans obtain their siddhi and give Ramana a blessing: all those who die by his arrows will be reborn as gods.

Meanwhile, Daśagrīva's sister, Purpala, has fallen in love with Ramana who rejects her, and Purpala advises her brother Daśagrīva to abduct Sītā. Marutse now transforms himself into a deer, which Ramana pursues. Lagśana, who thinks that Ramana is in distress, leaves Sītā to go to his assistance, and Daśagrīva carries off Sītā together with a plot of ground.

Ramana and Lagśana search everywhere for Sītā. They meet with the monkey-king Sugrīva who fights his elder brother Bālin for possession of their kingdom. Ramana makes a pact with Sugrīva, promising to make him king if he helps him to find Sītā. Ramana is unable to distinguish between Sugrīva and Bālin. The next day a mirror is attached to Sugrīva's tail and Bālin is killed by Ramana ; Ramana and Sugrīva return to their homes. Ramana waits three years for Sugrīva to return and fulfil his pledge, and eventually sends him a message by means of an arrow. Sugrīva comes with an army of monkeys, and the monkeys Paśgu, Sindu and Hanumanta are sent off to search for Sītā. They meet with Pada', the elder son of Agajaya, king of the eagles. Pada' tells them that Sītā was abducted by Daśagrīva.

Hanumanta jumps into the sea and goes to Laṅkapura. He finds Sītā in a castle with nine walls without gates and gives her a letter and a ring from Ramana. Hanumanta uproots the trees in the park and kills many demons. Hanumanta is captured and asks as a favour to be killed in the same way as his father was killed, so the demons wrap his tail in cloth, dip it in butter and set it on fire. Hanumanta thereupon burns the castle of the demons, and returns to Sītā who gives him a letter for Ramana. Hanumanta returns and gives the letter to Ramana.

The monkeys and men now set out for Laṅka. The monkeys Maku and Damsi (Dan'du) construct a bridge, and they all reach Laṅka. Daśagrīva's younger brother, Ampakarna (Udpakarna), advises his brother to flee. Daśagrīva does not listen to him and Ampakarna joins Ramana.

The demon Kumbhakarna is plunged into eternal sleep. Daśagrīva and the other demons finally succeed in waking him up, and he swallows the men and the monkeys, but Ramana and Hanumanta escape. Hanumanta is sent to fetch a herb from Mount Kailāsa. He returns with the entire mountain which he then replaces again. All the men and monkeys are revived.

Ramana fights with Daśagrīva whose younger brother, Birinaśa, deserts him and flees. Lagśana is killed, but Ramana cuts off Daśagrīva's horse-head. Daśagrīva dies, falling on the demons and killing most of them. Ramana liberates Sītā and revives Lagśana, and Sugrīva and Ramana return to their respective countries. Hanumanta is appointed minister of Sugrīva after whose death he becomes king.

The tale does not end there. The last part of the story tells how Ramana goes to suppress a revolt by King Benbala, leaving Sītā and her son Lava in the care of five hundred ṛṣis on Mount Malayana. When Lava is lost, the ṛṣis create another son out of Kuśa grass. On his return, Ramana overhears a conversation between the Licchavi Vimala (? Dri-ma dag-pa) and his wife who accuses Sītā of adultery. Ramana thereupon rejects Sītā who departs with her two sons. Hanumanta visits Ramana and explains that Daśagrīva was in fact unable even to approach Sītā. Ramana is convinced and sends for Sītā and his two sons. Hanumanta returns to his own kingdom, and Ramana, Sītā and their two sons live happily in the palace 'Old Earth' (*sa-rniṅ*).

The story of Rāma and Sītā was certainly also known in Central Tibet. The Sanskrit-Tibetan terminological dictionary, the Mahāvyutpatti, which was compiled at the beginning of the ninth century, contains an entry: *sītāharaṇam*, tib. *rol-rned phrogs-pa* (no. 7629). This is probably the title of a work known to the compilers of the Mahāvyutpatti, but we do not know if the story told in it was identical to the story outlined above. Another reference to a similar work is found in the biography of Atiśa (982-1054), who arrived in Tibet about 1040. Sarat Chandra Das, in his dictionary, refers to the title of this work : 'The story of the ravishment of Sītā and of the killing of the yakṣa A-śa-pa'.[2] Recently this biography of Atiśa has been published by Helmut Eimer. It mentions this work as an example of the many stories which are found in Tibet but are unknown in India.[3] However, the biography of Atiśa in which this work is mentioned, was composed at a much later date. According to Eimer it must have evolved in its present form between 1257 and 1469.[4] It is therefore not certain that the story of the ravishment of Sītā and of the killing of the yakṣa A-śa-pa was in fact already known in Tibet in the middle of the eleventh century. As far as I know no story with this title is known. One must assume that either it is not preserved, or that it does exist, but under a different title.

In the first half of the thirteenth century the famous Sa-skya Paṇḍita (1182-1251) composed a collection of four hundred and fifty-seven quatrains called in Tibetan : *Legs-par bśad-pa rin-po-che'i gter* and in Sanskrit :

Subhāṣitaratnanidhi.—This work was first studied by Csoma de Körōls (1784-1842), whose translation and edition of 234 stanzas was published after his death.[5] Of special interest is the old Mongolian translation of Sonom gar-a which was edited and translated by Ligeti.[6] Both the Tibetan text and the Mongolian translation of Sonom gar-a were edited and translated by James E. Bosson in : '*A Treasury of Aphoristic Jewels*' (Bloomington, 1969). Sa-skya paṇḍita was well versed in Sanskrit literature, and in the past it has even been assumed that his work was actually first composed in Sanskrit. However, according to James E. Bosson, this is not the case : 'Although many of the stanzas can be traced directly to Sanskrit originals, and, although there is an obvious Indian flavour in most of the verses, there is no basis for doubting that Sa-skya Paṇḍita actually made the collection himself and independently composed most of the verses, albeit on a popular Indian pattern' (*op. cit.*, p. 1). Stanza 321 refers to the killing of Rāvaṇa. Bosson's translation of the Tibetan text is as follows : 'The Great should abandon their desire for play and enjoyment and food. As a reprimand for having desired voluptuousness, it is renowed that

Rāvaṇa was killed in Laṅkā' (*chen-po rnams-kyi rtsed-mo danbde. daṅ zas la chags-pa spaṅ/'dod-la zen-pa'i le-lan-gyis' bod-'grog laṅ-kar bsad ces grags/*). The Mongolian translation is slightly different : 'Great persons should abandon their desire for play, food and enjoyment. By reason of having lusted for enjoyment, there is the saying that Tisegiri was killed in Laṅkā'. Bosson remarks in a note that the Mongolian translation of the name of Rāvaṇa seems to be thoroughly confused. According to him, this seems to be the name Tise, which is the Tibetan name for Mount Kailāsa, and the Sanskrit word *girī* (sic !). The Mongolian translation has Tes-e giriy. Undoubtedly, this represents Daśagrīva. It happens quite often that the Tibetan translators translate Sanskrit proper names, but that the Mongolian translators make use of a transliteration. Bosson quotes from another manuscript a variant Desegri which is even closer to Sanskrit Daśagrīva.

The story of Rāma is told in a commentary to the Subhāṣitaratnanidhi by Dmar-ston Chos-rgyal of Dbus. A blockprint of this commentary was described by E. Gene Smith, who writes : 'This commentary was written by a disciple of the author and is the best known in Tibet of the numerous commentaries'.[7] Dmar-ston's commentary is based upon an older commentary by Rin-chen dpal which was incomplete and full of errors. Dmar-ston Chos-rgyal received oral explanations from Sa-skya paṇḍita and wrote his work in accordance with these. Recently, Damdinsüren has published in Russian a work on the Rāmāyaṇa in Mongolia (' *Ramajaṇa v Mongolii*, Moskva,' 1979) in which he gives the text and translation of Dmar-ston Chos-rgyal's commentary on stanza 321 in which he tells the story of Rama. According to Damdinsüren, Rin-chen dpal is the name of a scholar who lived from 1230 to 1310 and who received an invitation from the Mongolian emperor Qubilai in 1292 (*op. cit.*, p. 136, n. 4). However, it is difficult to suppose that Dmar-ston Chos-rgyal was able to make use of the work of a scholar who was born only 22 years before the death of Sa-skya paṇḍita in 1252. The name Rin-chen dpal is quite common and it must be left to further research to determine his identity. It is quite clear from the colophon that the author of this commentary is Dmar-ston Chos-rgyal and not Rin-chen dpal as is asserted by Bosson (*op. cit.*, p. 14) and Heissig.[8]

Dmar-ston Chos-rgyal's commentary on the Subhāṣitaratnanidhi was published in 1968 by Tanzin Chhagdor, but the text is not free from errors. Damdinsüren's edition of the story of Rāma in this commentary is based upon a nineteenth century Mongolian blockprint (*op. cit.*, pp. 173-177). I have not been able to use other editions.

The story begins with Rāvaṇa's fruitless efforts to propitiate Mahādeva. Umā offers him her own miraculous power instead, but this is rejected by Rāvaṇa, and Umā predicts that his kingdom will be destroyed by a woman. Mahādeva sends his own son whose offer of his miraculous power is likewise rejected. Mahādeva's son predicts that his kingdom will be destroyed by a monkey. Finally, Mahādeva comes himself. Rāvaṇa asks Mahādeva for many things : a fortification, Trikūṭa, surrounded by the ocean ; the physicians of heaven : the Aśvins ; an army of demons ; more possessions than Kubera has; an indestructible iron wall ; and finally the siddhi of immortality. However, Mahādeva places Sarasvatī on his tongue and she distorts his wishes so that instead of the siddhi of immortality Rāvaṇa obtains the siddhi of immortality as long as his horse-head is not cut off.

A daughter is born to Rāvaṇa, and brahmans say that she possesses marks of ill omen. She is therefore placed in a copper box and committed to the waters. She is found by peasants who give her the name 'Found in the furrow'. They offer her to Ramana and she is given the name Sita. Ramana wants to hand over the throne to his younger brother Lakuma who refuses. The youngest of the three brothers, Bhīmasena (' Jigs-sde'), is therefore appointed king, and Ramana, Lakuma and Sita depart for the forest of penance.

Daśagrīva is very happy with his wife ; he asks whether there is on earth a more beautiful woman. He is told that in Jambudvīpa there is a very beautiful woman. Daśagrīva goes to the forest of penance and makes a beautiful deer, appear before the eyes of Ramana, Lakuma and Sita. Sita asks Ramana to capture the deer. Ramana at first refuses but finally cedes to Sita's wishes, and goes in chase. Daśagrīva meanwhile imitates Ramana's voice and Sita thinks that Ramana is in distress, and she asks Lakuma to go to his assistance. Lakuma does not want to leave Sita but she reproaches him with wishing for the death of the king so that he will be able to take possession of her. Lakuma surrounds Sita with a fence and tells her not to go beyond it. Daśagrīva now appears in the guise of a brahman and asks for alms. Sita refuses to move from her enclosure and Daśagrīva carries Sita off together with the whole plot of ground. Ramana and Lakuma return and see that Sita has been abducted, and Ramana understands that the deer was the manifestation of a demon.

Ramana and Lakuma search everywhere for Sita. They meet with a monkey-king Sugrīva, who is fighting his brother for the kingdom of the monkeys. Ramana promises to help him, but is unable to distinguish between the two monkeys, so Sugrīva attaches a mirror to his forehead and the king kills Bālin. Before dying, Bālin complains of the fact, that Ramana has taken the side of Sugrīva. Bālin's wife takes the corpse of her husband to the snowy mountain.

Sugrīva rejoices and promises to do whatever Ramana desires. Together they go to the valley of the monkeys, where they find Sugrīva's minister, a tall monkey with three eyes. This minister, Hanumandha, makes one enormous jump and arrives in the palace of god Vāyu. While waiting outside for food, Hanumandha tries to use the plough there but is unable to move it. His uncle, the god Vāyu, explains that the Nāgas under the earth fear his force and are holding firmly onto the plough. With another jump Hanumandha arrives in Laṅka and sees that Sita is imprisoned in a fruit garden. He is told that she is kept imprisoned because she does not want to marry the king of the demons. He goes to Sita and tells her that he is sent by Ramana. Sita does not trust him until he shows her Ramana's ring, when she gives him a message for Ramana saying that she is unable to escape. Hanumandha asks for food from Sita and receives only a little.

Hanumandha uproots the trees in the park and replants them with their tops in the ground and their roots in the air. The demons surround him, but each time he escapes by means of a jump. He is finally captured, and asks as a favour to be killed either in the way of the mother or that of the father. The first way consists of putting him in a store-room and giving him so much delicious food that he chockes to death. 'The way of the father' consists of wrapping his tail in cloth, pouring oil on it and setting it alight. This latter is done and Hanumandha burns the crystal palace of the king and all the other castles, which are made of lacquer. Finally, he wishes to dip his tail in the ocean. The Nāgas prevent this and extinguish the fire by means of vapour.

Hanumandha returns to Ramana and tells him why Sita is unable to come. The king asks Hanumandha to bring an army together near the ocean. While they are constructing a bridge, Ramana asks the great ṛṣi Vālmīki (Grog-mkhar) what kind of creatures there are in the great ocean. Vālmīki tells him that there is a creature which swallows fish and is called Timiṅ. There is another which swallows Timiṅ and another who swallows the one who swallows Timiṅ.

King Ramana and the army of the monkeys cross the bridge and are met by Rāvaṇa with his army, and Ramana cuts off his horse-head. King Ramana returns to his own country.

Some of the demons rouse Daśagrīva's younger brother, Kumbhakarna, who is plunged in meditation, by pouring molten bronze in his ear. He wakes up and asks what has happened. The demons tell him that his elder brother has been killed. Kumbhakarna inhales through his nose and, with the exception of Ramana and Hanumandha, all are transformed into skeletons.

Ramana sends Hanumandha to the snowy mountain of Kailāsa (Ti-se) to fetch a medicinal herb. Hanumandha does not find it, and is sent a second time. This time he brings the entire mountain back with him. With the help of the herb all the soldiers are revived. Ramana now orders him to return the mountain; Hanumandha throws it from afar back to its original place. This is the reason why, it said, the top of the mountain is slanting.

Ramana arrives and takes Sita back. The story concludes with the remark that all this happened to Rāvaṇa on account of the two curses.

In many respects this story is remarkably similar to the old Tun-huang version. There are some very interesting variations, however. In the Tun-huang version the two curses are uttered by Umā and Mahādeva's minister, Prahasti. In this story Prahasti is replaced by a son of Mahādeva. In both versions Daśagrīva asks for immortality and in both versions Sarasvatī changes his wish. However, in the Tun-huang version Daśagrīva expresses three wishes, all of which were changed by Sarasvatī. In Dmar-ston's version, Bhīmasena is a brother of Ramana and Lakuma. In neither version is Bharata mentioned. In Dmar-ston's version Marutse is not transformed into a deer. The deer is an optical illusion created by Daśagrīva. Another difference between the two accounts is that in the Tun-huang version a mirror is attached to the tail of Sugrīva. In Dmar-ston's version the mirror is attached to his forehead. Still another difference between the two versions is that the Tun-huang one does not mention the way of the mother as a possibility for killing Hanumandha. In Dmar-ston's version Vālmīki is mentioned, but only as a ṛṣi who tells Rāma about the sea-monster Timi, Timiṅgila and Timitimiṅgila. These three monsters are mentioned in the Divyāvadāna, and must have been known to the Tibetans from the Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādins.

Dmar-ston's version omits much, but also adds details which are not found in the Tun-huang version: for instance, Hanumandha's visit to the god Vāyu, the story of the Nāgas and the plough, and the extinguishing of the fire on Hanumandha's tail by the Nāgas. It is obvious that the story as told by Dmar-ston cannot have been derived directly from the Tun-huang version. This version or a version similar to it must still have been known in Tibet in the thirteenth century. Several details are different and there are some additions. Of course, many things have been omitted. The first part and the entire latter part dealing with the rejection of Sītā by Ramana are completely absent. It is of course quite probable that these parts of the story were perfectly well known in Tibet in the thirteenth century but that it was considered superfluous to tell the entire story in explanation of stanza 321 of the Subhāṣitaratnanidhi.

There are many later commentaries on the Subhāṣitaratnanidhi, both in Tibetan and in Mongolian. In his book, Damdinsüren studies six Mongolian translations or adaptations of Dmar-ston's commentary. He edits and translates one written in 1778-1779 by Cagar gebsi Blo-bzaṅ tshul-khrims. Damdinsüren remarks that the Mongolian versions contain details which are not found in Dmar-ston's text and that it is possible that the authors of these versions had at their disposal other sources relating to the Rāma story. As regards other Tibetan versions of the commentary on the Subhāṣitaratnanidhi Damdinsüren mentions a version the author of which is unknown. According to him the story of Rāma in this version is substantially the same as that found in Dmar-ston's version. Another one, written by a certain Tshul-khrims dpal, contains only a brief extract from Dmar-ston's version of the Rāma story. There are many other Tibetan commentaries on the Subhāṣitaratnanidhi, and I hope that Tibetan scholars will bring together as many different versions of the Rāma story as possible. By publishing them in a chronological order it will become possible to see to what extent they depend on Dmar-ston's version and to what extent they provide new details.

One of the most popular Indian works in Tibet is Daṇḍin's Kāvyādarśa, which was translated at the instigation of the famous 'Phags-pa (1235-1280) in the thirteenth century. The translation was revised by Blo-gros grtan-pa of Dpaṅ who lived from 1276 to 1342. Tibetan scholars have written very many commentaries on the Kāvyādarśa.[9] I am most grateful to Mr. Gene Smith for pointing out to me that the story of Rāma is told in the commentaries on the twenty-second *alaṃkāra*, the *udāttālaṃkāra*, of the second pariccheda. Mr. Gene Smith has been so kind as to provide me with the text of several commentaries on this *alaṃkāra*. These commentaries were written between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries. I would like to select two of them for further consideration. The first was written by Dge-' dun-'phel or Saṅghaśrī from Snar-thaṅ, probably in the year 1429. His version of the story of Rāma is often referred to by later authors. His detailed commentary on the Kāvyādarśa (*Sñan-ṅag me-loṅ-gi rgya-che grel-pa*) was published in 1976 in Thimphu in Bhutan. The story of Rāma is found on pages 107-128.

The story begins with the participation of Daśaratha in the battle between the gods and the demons. During the battle the axle of his chariot is broken. The younger queen perceives it and holds the axle firm with her hand. The gods are victorious and Daśaratha returns to his palace. He sees that there are many bloody wounds on the queen's hand and asks her the reason for it. She tells him what she has done for him during the battle. The king says to her that if this is true he will give her a great present. His retinue confirm her words and the king asks her what she desires. She tells him that at this moment there is nothing she wants, but if later she has a desire, he must not forget his promise. They live for a long time in great happiness. The king makes preparations to install Ramaṇa as king. The younger queen comes to see him and asks him if he has forgotten his former promise. She now has a wish : that the throne will be given to her own son. The king remembers his promise and tells Ramaṇa that, although he ought to be made king because he is the son of the elder queen and much stronger, this cannot be. He tells him to take Sita with him and to remain twelve years in the forest, because he has promised to give the throne to Bharata, the son of the younger queen. The prince is very high-minded. He obeys the words of his father and departs with Sita for the forest.

The king of the demons, Rāvaṇa of Laṅka, also called Daśagrīva, had in the past fathered a beautiful daughter but he was told that she was a human girl and would destroy the city of the demons if she remained in the land of the demons. She was put in a copper box and thrown into the ocean. Peasants find her in a furrow and see that she is very beautiful. They decide to offer her as wife to King Ramaṇa. Ramaṇa marries her and she received the name Sita. Her other name is Rol-rñed-ma " Found in the furrow ". Some time later, the king of the demons discovers the beautiful Sita in Jambudvīpa. He abducts her and carries her off to the land of the demons. Ramaṇa, who had left Sita in order to search for food, returns and cannot find her. He realises that she has been abducted by a demon. He follows his trail and arrives in a valley where there is a stream of warm and foul-smelling water. He discovers that this river has been produced by the drops of sweat of two monkey kings who are fighting for the kingdom. A female monkey asks him who he is. He tells her that he is Ramaṇa and asks why these two monkeys are fighting. She tells him that the former king has died of old age and that they do not agree about the succession. She asks him why he has come here, and Ramaṇa tells her that he is searching for Sita. She proposes a pact of mutual assistance and asks him to kill the enemy of her son.

She points out her son to him but when they are fighting the following day, Ramaṇa is unable to distinguish between the two monkeys. The female monkey says to Ramaṇa : 'You are very clever. You must know a way.' The king tells her to attach a shell ornament to the face of her son. The next day they fight again and Ramaṇa kills the other monkey. The author adds that since that time it has become a custom to attach shell ornaments to monkeys. The mother of the dead monkey, looking very terible, goes towards Ramaṇa who is on the point of shooting her with an arrow. She asks him if he is King Ramaṇa. When he answers : 'Yes'. She tells him that all those at whom he shoots an arrow will be hit. All those who are hit die, and all who die are reborn in noble families. Her son has also been reborn in a noble family and therefore she will do him no harm. She departs with the corpse of her son.

The monkeys go back to the forest and enjoy food and drink, and time passes. One day King Ramaṇa goes to the forest and sees that they are living on a hill top and enjoying food and drink. He is not content and plans to shoot an arrow. A female monkey arrives in haste and asks the king to forgive the monkeys for their forgetfulness. She promises that they will do all he tells them, and Ramaṇa asks the monkeys to assemble an army and to go to Laṅka. When they arrive at the shore of the ocean, they see heaps of foam which look like snowy mountains. The monkeys have always lived in sandy deserts and are dejected by the idea that they have to climb these mountains. The king shoots an arrow which passes through the foam without any resistance. The monkeys are comforted and go straight forward without any hindrance. They see the great ocean and the expanse of heaven. In the middle of the heavens they see a dark spot which looks like a city. The king of the monkeys asks Ramaṇa to shoot an arrow towards it, and a monkey who is very small and resembles a snake, coils around the arrow before it is released.

After five or six days they arrive at the other side of the ocean by means of many bridges which they lay one after the other. The army of demons awaits them. At this point in the story there is a long description of the fortifications of the city of the demons, and of the palace of Daśagrīva which is made of crystal, rubies and other precious stones. The gates of the palace are guarded by terrible many-armed doorkeepers. Tigers and other wild animals utter terrifying roars. Many birds, such as jīvajīvakas are making many different sounds. King Ramaṇa kills everybody with his arrows and enters the palace, where he sees a golden throne which is richly adorned. Daśagrīva himself has strong and coarse arms and legs, an enormous belly and wrinkles and veins which are as bulky as fore-arms. The claws of his feet and hands are made out of the iron of thunderbolts. On his ten necks are ten furious heads. His mouth is wide open and shows terrible tusks. He laughs with a loud laugh. He utters confused words and angry threats. Fire and smoke bellow forth from his mouth, nose and eyes. The hair of his head and beard is yellow-reddish and bristling, and his limbs are adorned with bloody serpents and monsters. Many demon kings made of pearls are visible. The monkey king and his followers are afraid, thinking: 'It is difficult to kill one demon king. How is it possible to kill many demon kings?' Ramaṇa tells them not to be afraid and comforts them, saying: 'They are probably reflections of the demon on the walls made of precious stones'. He sends the monkey king and two strong monkeys to have a closer look but they flee in fright. Ramaṇa tells them that it is not possible that there are so many demon kings; certainly they must be reflections. He sends them again and again to have a good look. They discover that the demon on the throne is warm and that the others are reflections without any warmth. The king kills the demon king with an arrow. He is said to have been reborn immediately as a god. King Ramaṇa with Sita and the monkey king return to their own countries. Two strong monkeys carry burning rags in their hands and burn the walls made of lac, and the city of the demons, Trikuṭa, is destroyed. The authors add that the Gur-mgon (a divinity of the Sa-skya school) is an incarnation of Ramaṇa.

King Ramaṇa arrives at the ocean and stirs it up with his mighty bow so that the water whirls in circles. The demons are all killed. Ramaṇa returns home and the dead demons are reborn in heaven. The Lord of the gods, Indra, is an old friend of the demons. A rain of spears, etc., descends on the army of the monkeys who are cut to pieces and killed. In the space between the clouds Indra is seen to draw his bow and to go towards Ramaṇa who draws his bow and aims at Indra. Indra is afraid and trembles. He says to Ramaṇa : ' Do not shoot. I shall revive all your monkeys. ' Indra causes heavenly nectar to rain and all monkeys are revived. The author concludes by saying that by means of this story one understands easily the loftiness of Ramaṇa's spirit and the greatness of the wealth of the demon king, i.e., the two meanings of the word *udātta* (*rgya-che-ba*). This refers to Kāvyādarśa.

II. 297 :

āśayasya vibhūter vā yan mahattvam anuttaraṃ/
udāttaṃ nāma taṃ prāhur alaṃkāraṃ manīṣiṇaḥ//

and II. 300 :

pūrvatrāśayamāhātmyam atrābhyudayagauravam/
suvyañjitam ativyaktam udāttadvayam apy adaḥ//

Saṅghaśrī's version also refers to Kāvyādarśa II. 299 with regard to the reflections of the demon king on the walls :

ratnabhittiṣu saṃkrāntaiḥ pratibimbaśātair vṛtaḥ/
jñāto laṅkeśvaraḥ kṛcchrād āñjaneyena tattvataḥ//

However, he has not made use of verse II. 298 :

guroḥ śāsanam atyetuṃ naśaśāka sa rāghavaḥ/
yo rāvaṇaśiraśchedakāryabhāre 'py aviklavaḥ//

In several respects Saṅghaśrī's version is rather aberrant. For instance, the story of the broken axle of Daśaratha's chariot is not mentioned in other commentaries on the Kāvyādarśa which I have seen. Other details also are missing in later commentaries. The authors of these commentaries do not fail to point out that Saṅghaśrī's version of the Rāma story contains many errors. A scholar who lived in the eighteenth century, Bstan-'dzin chos-kyi ñi-ma, Khams-sprul IV (1730-1779), is extremely critical of Saṅghaśrī and lists several errors made by him.[10]

A more orthodox version of the story of Rāma is found in a commentary written in 1586 by Rin-spuṅs-pa, ṅag-dbaṅ 'jig-rten dbaṅ-phyug grags-pa. The author first quotes Kāvyādarśa II. 297 and 298. The story begins with Rāvaṇa's efforts to propitiate Mahādeva. He cuts off all his ten heads as a sacrifice to him. Only his ten necks remain and that is why he is called Daśagrīva. As in Dmar-ston's version, Umā and Mahādeva's son offer their own miraculous powers and curse Daśagrīva when he rejects their offers. In this story the son of Mahādeva is said to have the face of a monkey. Perhaps this detail has been added in order to explain his curse, according to which Daśagrīva's kingdom will be destroyed by a monkey. Finally, Daśagrīva's heads are returned by Mahādeva who also grants him the siddhi of immortality provided his horse-head is not cut off. Daśagrīva boasts of his power, and that he can only be overcome by somebody of incomparable strength.

In the past, Daśaratha had been wounded by the weapons of the asuras in the battle between the gods and the asuras. After his return to Ayodhyā he was cured by his younger wife Kekeya. He grants her a wish. Later, when he wants to enthrone Rāmaṇa, Kekeya asks him to make her son Bharata king and to send Rāmaṇa to the forest for twelve years. The king tells Rāmaṇa to depart for the forest with Sītā. Rāmaṇa is not able to disobey the order of his father. The author adds that this shows the loftiness of his spirit (*āśayasya mahattvam*). He refers also to the story of Maṇicūda. The verse he quotes is in the third pallava, verse 95, of the Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā.

sa vīrakuñjaraharih śakto 'py arividāraṇe/
janakṣayabhayodvignaḥ kāruṇyāt samacintayat//

The author now quotes Kāvyādarśa II. 299 and explains the greatness of wealth (*vibhūter mahattvam*).

A beautiful girl was once born in the land of the demons but bad signs indicated that, if she remained there, she would destroy the city of Laṅkā. She was put in a copper box, confided to the waters, found by peasants, and offered to Rāmaṇa as his wife. Rol-rñed-ma, or Sītā enjoys herself with the king. Once when they are in the forest, the king of the demons discovers that she is the most beautiful woman in Jambudvīpa. His sister, Sla-byed-ma, transforms herself into a deer in order to lure the king away. The king surrounds Sitā with a wall of light and tells her not to pass beyond it : 'If you do, you will die.' The king pursues the deer to the seashore. The author adds that the time has now arrived for the fulfilment of the curses uttered by the goddess and the one with the monkey face. Rāvaṇa does not know that Sitā is the girl thrown in the waters. He appears before Sitā in the guise of a brahman and tries to abduct her. As Sitā is unwilling to disobey the order of the king, Rāvaṇa uses magic to take her away, together with a plot of land, to the country of the demons. The King is unable to capture the deer and realises that it is an optical illusion. He returns and discovers that Sitā has been carried away by Rāvaṇa. He goes in search for her and comes upon a river of warm water produced by the drops of sweat of the two monkeys 'Bable and Sugrīva, who are fighting for the kingdom. Rāmaṇa promises his help to Sugrīva, but on the first day of the fight he is distracted by the spectacle, and the second day he is unable to distinguish between the two monkeys. On the third day a mirror is attached to Sugrīva's forehead and the king kills 'Bable with an arrow. Sugrīva promises to do for Rāma whatever he wishes and Rāma tells him that Sitā has been taken away by a demon. Sugrīva tells Rāma that his minister Hanumantha is very clever. They go to Hanumantha, who is said to be the son of Mahādeva with the monkey face. He is very tall and has three eyes. When Hanumantha is asked if he knows a means of bringing Sitā back, he reflects a moment and then makes one big jump to the palace of his uncle, the god Vāyu. From there he arrives with one jumb in Laṅga. He sees Sitā who is imprisoned in an orchard. He goes to Sitā and tells her that he is sent by Rāmaṇa. She does not trust him, but Hanumantha shows her Rāmaṇa's ring. She gives him a message for the king, telling him that she is unable to escape and that if he has the necessary strength, he must come and fetch her. Hanumantha returns with one jump to Rāmaṇa, who assembles an army of monkeys. He arrives at the seashore and asks Vālmīki what kinds of creatures live in the ocean. Vālmīki tells him about the three kinds of sea-monsters, Timi, etc. The monkeys make a bridge over the ocean and arrive at the palace of the demon king. The walls of his palace are made out of jewels and are brilliant like mirrors. Hanumantha is surrounded by hundreds of reflections of Daśagrīva and is unable to distinguish between the real Daśagrīva and the reflections. Finally, by means of his miraculous powers he is able to know which is the real Daśagrīva and points him out to Rāmaṇa who cuts off his horse-head and thus kills him. He also kills millions of demons. The author adds that it is said that in order to redeem himself of the sin of killing, Rāmaṇa will appear in the Kali age on earth in the form of the Buddha, an incarnation of Viṣṇu.

Hanumantha goes to the orchard, uproots the trees and puts them upside down in the ground. The demons surround him and try to kill him. Although he can easily escape, he lets himself be captured in order to show his great magical skill. As in Dmarston's version he explains the two ways of killing, the way of the mother and the way of the father. Hanumantha tells them that it is a bad omen if the monkeys see him die. They must hide in their houses. With his fiery tail he burns the palace of the demon king and the city Trikūṭa together with the iron wall. King Rāmaṇa then takes Sitā and goes home.

Some monkeys have escaped, and they pour molten bronze in the ear of Kumbhakarna, the younger brother of Daśagrīva, who is plunged in meditation. Kumbhakarna is thus awakened, inhales deeply through his nose, and Sitā and all the monkeys are transformed into skeletons, but not the king or Hanumantha. The king sends Hanumantha to the snowy mountains to fetch a medicinal herb. He brings the wrong one and is sent off again. He now brings the whole mountain with him and tells Rāmaṇa to search for the herb himself. Rāmaṇa cures everybody with the herb and tells Hanumantha to put the mountain back in its place. Hanumantha throws it in its place. Since that time the top of the mountain has been askew. A piece of the mountain was cut off, and according to Vālmīki this is the mountain of Kailāsa (Tise). King Rāmaṇa returns with Sitā by means of Puṣpaka, the aerial palace of Rāvaṇa, and is honoured by Bharata, goes back to Ayodhyā and lives there happily.

The author adds that the splendour of the palace of the demon king is an example of the greatness of wealth. He refers to the story of Māndhātṛ and quotes verse 79 of the fourth pallava of the Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā :

> *bimbitais tridaśair yatra maṇibhūstambhabhittiṣu/*
> *suraloko bibharty eko 'py anekasuralokatām//*

He also quotes Kāvyādarśa II. 300. At the end, the author enumerates among his sources the Sanskrit commentaries on two hymns, the Viśeṣastava and the Devātiśayastotra, the commentary on the Subhāṣitaratnanidhi, etc. and makes a disparaging remark about Saṅghaśrī's version of the story. Prajñāvarman's commentaries on the two stotras mentioned were translated into Tibetan and can be found in the first volume of the Tanjur. His commentaries contain several extracts from the story of Rāma, for instance, the promise given to Kekeya and her request to have her son enthroned are told by Prajñāvarman in almost exactly the same words. However, it has to be pointed out that according to the colophon, the text of the Viśeṣastavaṭīkā was not translated in its entirety by Rin-chen bzaṅ-po (958-1055) and his work was completed by Sa-skya paṇḍita.[12] It is obvious that Dmar-ston's version of the Rāma story has been used extensively by Rin-spuṅs-pa.

The versions of the Rāma story by Saṅghaśrī and Rin-spuṅs-pa are only two of the many which can be found in the numerous commentaries on the Kāvyādarśa written by Tibetan and Mongolian scholars. The later versions which I have been able to see are, in general, rather similar to Rin-chen-spuṅs-pa's version but there are many differences in details which ought to be further examined. As in the case of the commentaries on the Subhāṣitaratnanidhi, I hope that Tibetan scholars will collect as much material as possible and publish it in chronological order.

This brief examination of four versions of the Rāma story in Tibet may have given some idea of the wealth of material which awaits further research. The story of Rāma has been popular in Tibet since about 800 A.D. upto the present day. Thanks to the efforts of Tibetan scholars very many Tibetan works have been reprinted in India and Bhutan in recent years. It has now become possible to study in much more detail the Indian stories which were known to Tibetan scholars in the past.

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[1] 'An Old Tibetan Version of the Rāmāyaṇa', *T'oung Pao*, 58 (1972), pp. 190-202. [Also published without the author's permission and without his corrections in *Hindutva*, vol. III, nos. 5-6 (August-September, 1972), and in *Cultural Forum*, vol, XV, no. 2 (January, 1973)]. The Tibetan text of all six manuscripts was published in *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 19 (1977), pp. 37-88: 'The Tun-huang Manuscripts of the Tibetan Rāmāyaṇa story'.

[2] *A Tibetan-English Dictionary* (Calcutta, 1902), pp. 1194 and 1346.

[3] Helmut Eimer, *Rnam thar rgyas pa* (Wiesbaden, 1979), vol. I, p. 236; vol. II, p. 206.

[4] *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 8.

[5] *JASBeng*, XXIV (1855), pp. 141-165; XXV (1856), pp. 257-291. Reprinted in *Tibetan Studies* (Calcutta, 1911), pp. 93-172.

[6] Cf. J. Kolmaś, 'The aphorisms (legs-bshad) of Sa-skya Paṇḍita', *Proceedings of the Csoma de Körös Memorial Symposium* (Budapest, 1978), p. 189, n. 2.

[7] *University of Washington Tibetan Catalogue* (Seattle, 1969), Part I, pp. 122-123.

[8] James E. Bosson, *op. cit.*, p. 14 ; W. Heissig, *Mongolische Handschriften, Blockdrucke, Landkarten* (Wiesbaden, 1961), p. 32.

[9] The Tibetan translation of the Kāvyādarśa was published by A. C. Banerjee: *Kāvyādarśa*. University of Calcutta, 1939. On the Tibetan translation and the Tibetan and Mongolian commentaries see Sh. Bira, *Problems of history, culture and historiography of the MPR* (Ulaanbaatar, 1977), pp. 338-351, 372-378 ; Ts. Damdinsüren, *Studia Mongolica*, IV, 1 (Ulaanbaatar, 1962), pp. 1-24.

[10] Cf. *Rgyan-gyi bstan-bcos me-loṅ paṇ-chen bla-ma'i gsuṅ-bzin bkral-ba dbyaṅs-can ṅag-gi rol-mtsho legs-bśad nor-bu'i 'byuṅ-khuṅs* (Tashijong, Palampur, H. P., 1969), p. 453.

[11] *Sñan-ṅag me-loṅ-gi rgya-cher 'grel-pa mi-'jigs-pa seṅ-ge'i rgyud-kyi ṅa-ro dbyaṅs*, pp. 121b-126a. *Sa-skya bka'i-'bum*, vol. 8 (Tokyo, 1968), pp. 277.2.5-279.3.3 ; Ngawang Sopa's edition (New Delhi, 1975), pp. 363-377.

[12] Cf. P. Cordier, *Catalogue du fonds tibétain de la Bibliothéque Nationale*, 2e partie (Paris, 1909), p. 3 ; L. Zwilling, ' The story of Vyāsa and Kāśīsundarī', *Journal International Association of Buddhist Studies*, I, 1 (1978), p. 65.

RAMAYANA IN INSCRIPTIONS

C. SIVARAMAMURTHI

THE *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki being the *ādi kāvya* or the first spurt of poetry sprung out of excessive emotion, in this case of grief, *karuṇa rasa*, in a sudden gush of compassion, has been the fountain and source of all later compositions. The poets have principally used Vālmīki over and over again ; and Ānandavardhana's great dictum, as Professor Mahāmahopādhyāya S. Kuppuswami Sastriyar has so very often reiterated, is that however much the poets draw from that perennial source of the ocean of poetry, it grows, it expands and flourishes, increasing all the more in its volume and depth. He says, ' The same familiar things—they never fade ; they reappear, always fresh in the perennial spring of poetry. Thousands and thousands of masters of speech may draw from the resources of poetry ; they are still inexhaustible like the immense resources of nature. All this is by virtue of the supreme potency of the principle of *dhvani*, which consists in the preponderance of poetic suggestion : *dristapūrvā api hyarthāḥ kāvye rasaparigrahāt, sarve navā ivābhānti madhumāsā iva drumāḥ*, DHVANYĀLOKA 4.4 *vāchaspatisahasrāṇām sahasrair api Yatnatah, nibaddhāpi kshayam naiti prakṛitir jagatām iva*, DHVANYĀLOKA 4.9. '

This is absolutely true since there is no poet who has not saluted in a worthy manner Vālmīki, the first poet, and has not freely drawn from his ideas and sometimes even whole lines from his verses which are so mellifluous and which add grace and colour as well as irridescence to even the very best poetry. Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti are no exception to this nor Bāṇa, and this sums up the entire range of Sanskrit literature, as these constitute the principal mellifluent poets in Sanskrit literature and the others come in their train. Kshemendra goes one step further. He calls himself Vyāsadāsa, as he is so enamoured of the great epic poet. He has paid a tribute both to Vālmīki and Vyāsa by condensing in the most charming manner in his own way the theme of the *Rāmayāṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* in his famous works *Rāmāyaṇamañjarī* and *Bhāratamañjarī.*

Poets who have composed the charters, *praśastis* of great kings in India have been no exception to the rule of the general poets that have made Sanskrit literature such a great treasure house of poetry. From the earliest times the inscriptions in India breathe the fragrance of the sweet poetry of Valmīki. Not only the exploits of Rāma have been the ideal for the great kings of yore, who have meticulously followed the *dharma* established by Rāma who was the very embodiment of *dharma* itself, but his impossible exploits and his fame thereby have been almost emulated by the kings. Like inscriptions, legends on coins have also been inspired by the prowess of Rāma, his heroic exploits. One of the copper-plate grants the Kaśākuḍi plates of the Pallava king Nandivarman in beautiful Pallava Grantha characters of the eighth century runs : *laṅkājayādharitararāmaparākramaśrīr udvṛittaśatrukulasaṁkshaya-dhūmaketuḥ vātāpinirjayaviḍambitakumbhajanmā vīras tato'jani jayī narasiṁhavarmā.* Then arose Narasiṁhavarman, the victor who undermined even the great glory of the valour of Rāma who triumphed over Laṅkā, who was an enveloping planet like Rāhu for the annihilation of the families of opposing princes, who almost put to shame even the pitcher-born sage Agastya by destroying Vātāpi the capital of the Western Chāḷukyan king Pulakeśi—like Vātāpi the demon destroyed by Agastya. *Epigraph, Ind.* 8, p. 320. This is the eulogy of his ancestor Narasimhavarmaṇ, a great warrior, who has had a great navy and who could overcome Ceylon and restore his very dear friend Mānavarman to the Ceylonese throne which was usurped by a cousin of his. The conquest of Laṅkā has always been in the mind of not only great kings whose ambition was to conquer as much territory as possible, of course in a spirit of *dharmavijaya* and not in any other of the two methods described in Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra.*

Even in the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself, when the spies come to inform Rāma of the talk in the town of Ayodhyā, they describe how the people always speak with the greatest pride how Rāma built a bridge over the ocean, a thing unheard of and unimaginable. He had won over the terror of the world, Rāvaṇa ; but, unfortunately, the people of Ayodhyā who had never seen the bridge could take pride in it, but would not bring to their mind the impossible entry into the fire and Sītā's depuration and miraculous arrival from the fire as proof of her innocence and the highest chastity. Hanumān could well say ' she could burn fire by her single-minded devotion to Rāma and her penance but fire could never touch her ; least of all burn her ' : *api sā nirdahed agnim na tām agniḥ pradhakshyati*, (*Rāmāyaṇa* 5, 55, 29).

It is a well known fact in history that the Pāṇḍyas and the Choḷas and even the Cheras repeatedly overcame Ceylon which was known as Īḷam and issued coins in commemoration thereof. Even as late as the thirteenth century Sundara Pāṇḍya issued coins assuming the title of Rāma himself after the conquest of Ceylon. The legend *laṅkeśvara*, clearly given in Nāgarī characters as in the case of other coin types of the Choḷas and Pāṇḍyās of the period, is another way of expressing *īḷamkoṇḍa* conqueror of Ceylon. There are those who have called themselves *seturāma* or *setu* in shortest form, Rāma who built the bridge over the ocean, which as already noticed from the text of the *Rāmāyaṇa* was the wonder of the citizens of Ayodhyā. This has also served as a title as *setupati* and given in coins as legend of a dynasty of rulers from the seventeenth century. The exploits of the thousand armed Arjuna, the Haihaya king whom Paraśurāma overcame, which are also a great heroic theme in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* and Bhavabhūti's dramatic version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, are also often referred to in inscriptions. In the Pallava Kūram copperplate grant of Parameśvaravarman occurs the line *sahasrabāhor iva samaraśatanirvishṭasahasrabāhukarmaṇaḥ* (*S. Ind. Inscr*, Vol. 2, p. 3).

Paraśurāma and Rāma are both great and both come for great appreciation not only by Vālmīki but also by Vyāsa, Bhavabhūti and Bāṇa. The theme is again a very noble one in the *Rāmāyaṇa* so far as heroism is concerned. In describing Paraśurāma, Kālidāsa specially mentions how he combined in himself glory both maternal and paternal in the sacred thread *upavīta* to proclaim him a Brahmaṛishi, the worthy son of Jamadagni, along with the bow and axe with which he could fight any enemy to proclaim the glory of his mother, Renukā a princess, combining in himself, as it were, the cool moon and hot-rayed sun, or the sandal tree with the fiery snake entwining it : *pitryam aṁśam upavītalakshaṇam mātṛikam cha dhanur ūrjitham dadhat, yaḥ sasoma iva gharmadīdhitiḥ sadvijihva iva chandanadrumaḥ* (*Raghuvaṁśa* 11.64). Kālidāsa himself brings together the name Rāma twice and refers to Paraśurāma and Rāma Dāśarathi. The same name Rāma is equally applicable to both Daśaratha's son as well as to that formidable foe, one so dear to him and the other so awe-inspiring, like a lovely large gem adorning a necklace and the other a bright gem on the head of a cobra : *nāma rāma iti tulyam ātmaje vartamānam ahite cha dāruṇe, hṛidyam asya bhayadāyi chābhavad ratnajātam iva hārasarpayoḥ* (*Raghuvaṁśa*, 11. 68).

It is interesting that an inscription of the Kulu king Bahadur Singh brings together two Rāmas and also another, Balarāma, Saṅkarshaṇa, all of whom are heroes for emulation. The description of the king as exceeding in valour, that of Rāma, Rāma and Rāma is significant : *rāmarāmarāmaparākramaparākram ānadaksha* (*Arch. Sur. of Ind. Ann. Rep.* 1902-03, pl. 71).

The exploits are not the only ones that have inspired. Even the idea of the endearment of Rāma has been emulated by Kumāra Gupta to his elephant rider type of coin, where the prince is shown riding the elephant with the umbrella held over his head, clearly after the one-voiced exclamation of the people of Ayodhyā so anxious to have Rāma as their beloved crown prince *yuvarāja* and informing Daśaratha so : *ichchhāmo hi mahābāhum raghuvīram mahābalam gajena mahatā yāntam rāmam chhatrāvṛitānanam,* (*Rāmāyaṇa* 2.2.22). When Daśaratha consults his people from Ayodhyā and the large *janapada* domain beyond how they liked the idea of his crowning Rāma as heir apparent, with one accord everyone expresses supreme delight and desire to see their prince Raghuvīra supremely powerful, always before their eyes seated in majesty on the huge state elephant, coursing along, with the umbrella held by the parasol-bearer over his moon-face, to shade it from the solar rays ; and we find this inspiring several later kings to crave for the affection for their subjects and in similar glory to represent this, as in the elephant-rider type of Kumāra Gupta who presents himself as a beloved prince on elephant-back, parasol-covered like Rāma himself. This is a suggestion taken from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and used, almost as in words in a copperplate grant or in an inscription, by a sculpted figure representation, which is indeed most charming.

Similarly the very words and lines of Vālmīki have been used in numerous inscriptions, almost without a strain in drawing on those very lines, as they occur in the most natural way, the text of Vālmīki being ever on the lips of every scholar, poet, connoisseur, layman or devotee, peasant or king. The *Rāmāyaṇa* was so popular that there was no escaping the use of the text without ever being conscious of the act as it was far from a deliberate attempt. It also proves the great popularity of the *ādi kāvya*, the greatest work, the most mellifluous and sweet in Sanskrit literature.

The highest merit in the work of this poet sage Vālmīki is acknowledged by the sweetest poet of India, Kālidāsa. The theme being Rāma's story, the composition of Vālmīki, and the boys Kuśa and Lava sweet-voiced like Kinnaras, what was it that was lacking to captivate the hearts of listeners : *vṛittaṃ rāmasya vālmīkeḥ kṛitis tau kinnarasvanau, kim tad yena mano hartum alam syātām na śṛiṇvatām*, (*Raghuvamśa* 14.64). Bhavabhūti has, not only used whole verses of Vālmīki in his work, but has also paid the glowing tribute to the author of his inspiration that sense hastens to follow the utterances of such early sages Vālmīki: *ṛishīṇām punar ādyānām vācham artho' nudhāvati*, (*Uttararāmacharita* I. 10). When such eminent poets were proud of their indebtedness to this prime author of poetry, it is no wonder that lesser writers freely drew their inspiration from his compositions. Apart from the poets well known in Sanskrit literature, there are the lesser known poets who have recorded their compositions, however, on more permanent material. By a strange irony of fate, however, the more popular classical works were copied on perishable material. Poetry in inscriptions is itself important, and particularly with its passages and ideas taken from Vālmīki, is indeed a very pleasant study to compare, contemplate and ruminate.

The first half line of the opening verse of the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself occurs in one of the early grants of South India of the fourth century A.D. This is of Damodravarman of Ānandagotra recording a gift of land to Vedic *Brāhmaṇa* scholars, *Veda* described as of various *gotras* and *charaṇas* and practising austerities and recitals of their sacred texts : *ebhyo brāhmaṇebhyo nānāgotracharaṇatapassvādhyāyaniratebhyaḥ* (*Epigraph, Ind*, 17, p. 329). This is clearly reminiscent of the first line of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of the first *sarga* of the *Bālakāṇḍa* : *tapassvādhyāyaniratam tapasvī vāgvidām varam.* (*Rāmāyana* 1.1.1).

Even very much earlier, in about 130 A.D., the composer of the Girnār inscription from Gujarat of the Mahāksatrapa Rudradāman shows his indebtedness to Vālmīki by the use of the expression, *parjanyena ekārṇavabhūtāyām iva pṛithivyām kṛitāyām* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 8, p.42), meaning, ' when by the downpour of the clouds the earth thus transformed, as it were, all of it into one expanse of ocean '. This indeed savours of the line *ayam hyutsahate kruddhaḥ kartum ekārṇavam jagat*, (*Rāmāyaṇa* 5.49.20) : ' roused to anger, he can transform all the earth into one expanse of ocean, which is the remark of Hanumān in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, who amazed at the majesty of Ravana, exclaims so in wonder.

In the Nāsik cave inscription of Balasiri, which is almost of about the same time, the line *porajananivisesa samasukhadukhasa* meaning, ' who fully felt as his own the joys and sorrows of the citizens ', is an excellent tribute paid by the sorrowing mother to her son Gautamīputra Sātakarṇī during the reign of her grandson Vasishṭhīputra Puḷumāvi, suggestive of the description of the noble qualities of Rāma who grieves immensely at the distress of his people and like a father rejoices in their merry-makings : *vyasaneshu manushyāṇām bhṛiśam bhavati duḥkhitaḥ, utsaveshu cha sarveshu piteva paritushyati* (*Rāmāyaṇa* 2.2.40-41).

On the rock at Girnār, the line of Skandagupta's inscription of 457 A.D. : *samramjayām cha prakṛitīr babhūva pūrvasmitābhashaṇamānadāmaiḥ* (*Corp. Inscr.* Ind. 3, p. 60), meaning, ' he pleased the subjects by his conversations always prefaced by a smile, his courtesies and gifts', reminds us of the description of Rāma, *smitapūrvābhibhāshī cha dharmam sarvātmanā śritah* (*Rāmāyaṇa* 2.2.42), whose speech is ever preceded by a smile, who adheres to righteousness wholeheartedly. Even the previous line of the inscription, *yo lālayāmāsa cha pauravargān. . . putrān suparīkshya doshān* (*C. Inscr. Ind.* 3, p. 6), meaning, ' who fondled the citizens like a father his children carefully scrutinising their faults', is after the immediately preceding line in the *Rāmāyaṇa* : *paurān svajanavan nityam kuśalam pariprichchhati, putreshvagnishu dāreshu preshyaśishyagaṇeshu cha, nikhilenānūpūrvyā cha pitā putrān ivaurasān*, (2.2.38-39). The line *devadvijaguruvṛiddhopachāyinaḥ*, (*Epigraph Ind*. 8. p. 161), meaning, 'respectful to gods, Brāhmaṇas and aged people,' in the Pīkira grant of Pallava Siṁhavarman, is clearly a borrowal from the *Rāmāyaṇa* ; *bahuśrutānām vṛiddhānām brāhmaṇānām upāsitā*, (2.2.33), meaning, 'the adorer of great scholars, aged folk and Brāhmaṇas'. A single line from the *Rāmāyaṇa, bāhuchachhāyām avashṭabhya yasya loko mahātmanaḥ* (5.34.31), 'the great being on whose arm-shade relied everyone', is elaborated in the verse of the Tālagunda inscription of the Kadaṁba king Kākusthavarman : *gharmākrāntā iva mṛigagaṇā vṛiksharājim proviśya chchhāyāsevāmriditamanaso nirvṛitim prāpnuvanti, tadvajjyāyovihitagatayo bāndhavās sānubandhāḥ prāpuḥ śarmāvyathitamanaso yasya bhūmim praviśya* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 8, p. 33), meaning, 'as flocks of deer overcome by heat feel relieved by entering a grove of trees and gladdening their hearts by enjoyment of their shade, similarly his kinsmen, with all their dependents, checked in their careers by stronger folk and distressed in mind, gained relief on entering his domain.'

This also brings to our mind two other verses of Kālidāsa from his *Abhijñanaśākuntalam* and one from the *Raghuvaṁśa* : *cchāyābaddhakadaṁbakam mrigagaṇam romantham abhyasyatu* (*Abhijñānaśākuntalam* 2.6) and *śamayati paritāpam chhāyayā saṁśritānām*, (*Abhijñānāśākuntalam* 5.7) and *abhijagmur nidāghārtās chhāyāyā vṛiksham ivādhvagāḥ* (*Raghuvaṁśa* 10.5), meaning respectively, 'let the deer, gathered in herds under the shade of trees, continue to chew the cud'; 'removes the suffering of those seeking relief by its shade' 'and ; 'approached him as travellers tormented by heat go to a tree affording shade.'

The idea is compressed in one of the short *birudas* of the Pallava king in the Kailāsanātha temple tree affording shade : *chhāyāvṛikshaḥ* (*S. Ind. Insc*. I. p. 18) whose source is also to be sought in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the line of Kālidāsa where the word itself occurs : *abhijagmur nidāghārtā chchhāyā-vṛiksham ivādhvagāḥ* (*Raghuvaṁśa* 10.5), meaning, 'they went to him as travellers afflicted by heat seek a tree affording shade.'

On the Mahākūṭa pillar, a line of the inscription of Maṅgaleśa reads, *samudra iva gambhīraḥ kshamayā pṛithivīsamaḥ* (*Ind. Antiq.* 19, p. 17), meaning, 'deeply noble like the ocean and equal to the earth in the quality of forbearance', at once calls to one's memory the lines of Vālmīki describing Rāma, *samudra iva gāmbhīrye dhairyeṇa himavān iva, vishṇunā sadṛiśo vīrye somavat priyadarśanaḥ, kālāgnisadṛiśaḥ krodhe kshamayā pṛithivīsamaḥ* (*Rāmāyaṇa* 1.1.17-18), 'deeply noble like the ocean, like Himavān (Himālaya) in courage, equal to Vishṇu in valour, pleasant in appearance like the moon, equal to the Fire of Deluge in anger and the earth in forbearance'.

Another line of the same inscription, *jyehshṭha-śreshṭhaguṇa-samudayoditapururaṇaparākramāṅkapriyaḥ* (*Ind. Ant.* 19, p. 17), meaning, 'the eldest of excellent qualities, that ennobled his name Purusaṇaparākramāṅka that he loved,' is after the line in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *jyeshṭham śreshṭhaguṇair yuktam priyaṁ daśarathaḥ sutam*, (1.1.20), 'his eldest, possessed of excellent qualities and most beloved, Daśaratha. . .'

In the Satāra grant of the Eastern Chāḷukyan king Vishṇuvardhana, nephew of Maṅgaḷeśa, and younger brother of Puḷakeśi of the 7th century, the line *tasya putro mahātejāḥ kandarpa iva mūrtimān, dharmajñas cha kṛitajñas cha pārthatulyaparākramaḥ*, (*Ind. Ant.* 19, p. 309), meaning, 'his son of great lustre, like Cupid incarnate, righteous and grateful, equal in valour to Arjuna', are clearly after those in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *rūpavān subhagaḥ śrīmān kandarpa iva mūrtimān*, (5.34.30), beautiful, pleasing and auspicious, like Cupid incarnate and *dharmajñas cha kṛitajñas cha satyavākyo dṛiḍhavrataḥ* (*Rāmāyana* 1.1.2), meaning, 'righteous and grateful, truthful and steadfast.'

Among the seventh century inscriptions of Pallava Narasimha varman at Mahābalipuram, there is one on an ornamental pavilion of the Dharmarājaratha which gives one of the *birudas* or titles *satyaparākramaḥ* (*South Ind. Inscr.* 1, p. 4), meaning, 'truly valorous', one of the many epithets used by Vālmīki to describe Rāma, *divyair guṇaiḥ śakrasamo rāmaḥ satyaparākramaḥ* [(*Rāmāyaṇa* 2.28), *tam evam guṇasampannam rāmam satyaparākramam*,] (*Rāmāyaṇa* 1.1.19, 2.2.48), meaning, 'equal to Indra in the divine qualities, Rāma was truly valorous ; Rāma, full of such qualities and truly valorous '.

The line *chakravartilakshaṇopetasya* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 8, p. 239) in the Chendalur plates of the Eastern Chāḷukyan king Sarvalokāśraya is clearly after the line of Bāṇa, *chakravartilakshṇopetaḥ*, meaning, possessing the marks of an emperor (*Kādambarī*, i, p. 7.), though the ultimate source is Vālmīki's line *pārthivavyanjanair yuktaḥ pṛithuśrīḥ, pārthivarshabhaḥ* (*Rāmāyaṇa* 5.1.5.), meaning, "(having the marks of a king, immensely wealthy and foremost among monarchs) '.

The model for Ravikīrti's verse in the Aihoḷe inscription of Puḷakeśi, the Western Chāḷukyan emperor, graphically describes the battle, *jalanidhir iva vyoma vyomanaḥ samo' bhavad ambudhih* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 6, p. 6), meaning, ' the sky resembled the ocean and the ocean the sky,' is clearly Vālmīki's verse, *gaganam gaganākāram sāgarah sāgaropamah, rāmarāvaṇayor yuddham rāmarāvaṇayor iva* (*Rāmāyaṇa* 6, 110, 23-24), ' the sky resembled the sky, and the ocean the ocean, as the battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa just resembled the very battle '.

The influence of Vālmīki was not confined only to India. Wherever Sanskrit has flourished, Vālmīki's poetry has been the main inspiration. We can take, for example, instances from Indonesia. In the Yūpa inscriptions of king Mūlavarman from Kutei in east Borneo to be dated in the 4th century A.D., in Pallava Grantha characters, now preserved in the Museum at Jakarta, the line *jayatytibalah śrīmān śrīmūlavarmā ṇripaḥ*, meaning, ' the prosperous Sri Mūlavarman of immense strength is victorious, ' is clearly after the verse of Vālmīki, *jayatyatibalo rāmo lakshmaṇas cha mahābalaḥ, rājā jayati sugrīvo rāghaveṇābhipālitaḥ* (*Rāmāyaṇa* 5.42.33). This is only one of the many such echoes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* occurring in Indonesia, Cambodia, Borneo and other places. It is a vast study, very interesting, very fruitful, revealing the tremendous influence of the *ādi kavi* in every place in Asia where Indian thought has travelled.

THE RĀMĀYAṆA IN SOUTH-EAST ASIAN SANSKRIT EPIGRAPHY AND ICONOGRAPHY

JEAN FILLIOZAT

THE written or oral versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in South-east Asia in the form they reach to us are rather modern works. But evidences of the knowledge of Rāma's story are available even in the old periods of the relations between India and Indo-Chinese Peninsula.

Epigraphical evidences

The most ancient document seemingly implicating the knowledge of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, more precisely of the Vālmīki's *Rāmāyana*, is the most ancient inscription found on the Eastern coast of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula at Vo-canh (Vietnam). It is in Sanskrit and, unfortunately, much damaged. It is undated but, according to the Palaeographical evidence, belongs to the 3rd century A.D. It is engraved by descendants of a king Śrīmāra. This name is a Sanskrit transcription of a regular Tamil title of Pāṇḍyan kings of South-India : Śrīmāṟaṉ.

The composition of the text in Sanskrit by Tamil speaking peoples is quite natural. Sanskrit alone, in those days, was an all-Indian language, used even in foreign countries as a link language, because it was taught and known at least by some persons in every country. Also the easiest way to reach South-east Asia was from Pāṇḍyan coasts or from Laṅkā to Sumatra where Tamilians used to collect camphor (*Maṇimēkalai*, 15.3.). One big mountain called Maleus by Plinius was known by Indians and gave shadow alternatively towards the North and the South during six months every year. So this Maleus (Tam. Malai) was located on the equinoctial line or very near of it. The only one fulfilling this condition is the Gunung Keriñci (=Tamil *Kuriñci*), near the Western coast of Sumatra (3805 m. high). One cape Maleoukolon is situated in the same area by Ptolemeus and actually is located near the foot of this mountain[1]. From South Sumatra, through the Sundastrait, it was rather easy to sail to the Indo-Chinese Peninsula or to Indonesian islands.

Whatever may have been the way of propagation of the Sanskrit poetry to Vō-canh, the inscription expresses in the very words of the *Rāmāyaṇa* the rule of this world of coming back for those who have departed : . . .*lokasyāsya gatāgatim*. . . (Vo-canh, l. 11, Rām. South. rec., II, 110, 1 ; North, II 119, [2], It may be supposed these words may have also existed in some other text or composed in coincidence with the wording of Vālmīki. But the probability is much more in favour of an actual reminiscence of the famous text of Vālmīki.

Vālmīki himself is named in another inscription found also in Vietnam at Tra-Kieu. This inscription has been engraved long before the Vietnamese annexation of the country. It comes from the king of Campā Prakāśadharma who reigned there in the second half of the 7th century A.D. It is also damaged but runs as follows according to Paul Mus who published it.[3]

yasya śokāt samutpannaṃ ślokam brahmābhipū(jati)[4]/
viṣṇoḥ pumsaḥ purāṇasya mānuṣasyātmarūpiṇaḥ//
xxxx ritaṃ kṛtyaṃ kṛtaṃ yenābhiṣecanam/
kaver ādyasya maharṣṣer v vālmike'ś śru xx riha//
pūjāsthānam punaḥ tasya kṛta xx y xxxx/
prakāśadharmmanṛpatiḥ sarvāriganasūdanaḥ//
vidyāśaktikṣamālakṣmīkīrttidhairyya-(guṇānvitaḥ)/
xxty eṣa jagatkāntaś śārade 'ntarite n(r)ipa//

As the verbs have disappeared it is not possible to completely translate this text, but it is evident it refers to the creation of the *śloka* originating from the sorrow of Vālmīki, primordial poet and maharṣi and being a human form of the antique Man Viṣṇu. The story of this origin of the *śloka* praised by Brahman is the subject of *Bālakāṇḍa* IInd Sarga.

There are in Vietnam some late echoes of the knowledge of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the ancient kingdom of Campā. The name given to

Daśaratha in Vietnamese means "Ten-cars" and Rāvaṇa is named as 'Ten-heads' (i.e. Daśānana).[5]

In Cambodia the knowledge of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is evidenced already at the beginning of the 7th century in the inscription of Val Kantel (K 359)[6] which emanates from Somaśarman, a brāhmaṇa, who was foremost among the knowers of the Sāmaveda and husband of a daughter of a prince Vīravarman, sister of one Bhavavarman and mother of one Hiraṇyavarman. The exact position of these princes is not acertained and there are two Bhavavarmans but they belong to the beginning of the 7th century. This is in accordance with the palaeographical evidence[7].

According to the text " Somaśarman established Tribhuvaneśvara joined with Arka, and having great ritual of homage with very large fees, gave, with the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Purāṇa*, the whole *Bhārata* and make fixation of their recitation uninterrupted every day ".

> śrīsomaśarmmārkayutaṃ sa śrītribhuvaneśvaram/
> atiṣṭhipan mahāpūjam atipuṣkaladakṣiṇam//
> rāmāyaṇapurāṇābhyām aśeṣam bhārataṃ dadat/
> akṛtānvaham acchyedyāṃsa ca tadvācanāsthitim//
>
> (st. 3-4)
>
> In the inscription Rāmāyaṇa is written with dental *na.*

This spelling is not isolated. It is found in a later inscription (Prāsāt Sankhaḥ, K 218, st. 11) which also alludes to the telling of stories (*kathā*) from *Purāṇarāmāyana* (sic) *bhārata*, etc. . .[8] This inscription belongs to the 11th century and give evidence of continuity of the practise of such recitations in Cambodia throughout the centuries. We shall find later other examples of this spelling.

The long inscription of Pre Rūp, (K 806) a monument in the Angkor's Area built by Rājendravarman who reached the kingship in 944 A.D., alludes to *Atharvaveda* (st. 64) *Bhārata* (83), Panini (47 and 258), *Raghuvaṃśa* (164, 199, 211 and 299) and to *Rāmāyaṇa* itself (207). The allusions are implicit. They consist in the utilisation of these texts in comparisons or puns without mentioning their titles. That implies these texts were well known in the literary circles where the inscriptions were composed. Only one is a little more explicit reference to the 'atharvanic (*ātharvanīka siddhiḥ*, st. 64) performance' which, as George Coedès has pointed out, is an *abhiṣeka* ceremony using AV. IV. 8, 59.

[The passage which alludes to the *Rāmāyaṇa* is (st. 207) :]

mārīca iva rāmsaya nāmādyekākṣaraśravā(t)/
yasyārirājo vīro pi jagāmānanyajāṃ bhiyam//

'Like Mārīca by hearing the single first syllabe of Rāma's name, his foe-king though a hero, went to the fear without any more reason.'

The *Rāmāyaṇa* śloka which inspired this stanza which is also a śloka unlike many others in different parts of the inscription is this saying of Mārīca to Rāvaṇa :

rakārādini nāmāni rāmatrastasya rāvaṇa/
ratnāni ca rathā'ś caiva vitrāsaṃ janayanti me//
South Rec. III, 39, 18
rakārādīni vākyāni rāmād bhītasya rāvaṇa/
ratnāni ca ramaṇyaś ca trāsaṃ saṃjanayanti me//
North. Rec. III, 43, 35.

'For whom who has fear of Rāma, ô Rāvaṇa, the names (words) beginning with *rā* (e.g.) *ratna* and *ratha* (*ramaṇya*) produce the fear.'

In the 11th century A.D. several other Cambodian inscriptions mentioned the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

The inscription K 598 of Prāsāt Trapān Run[10] dated 1006 A.D., making the eulogy of one Pañcagavya, qualified of Kavīndrapaṇḍita, who was the author of several foundations, says :

śabdārthāgamaśāstrāni (sic) kāvyaṃ bhāratavistaram/
rāmāyaṇañ ca yo dhītya śiṣyān apy adhyajīgapat//

'He who, after having learnt the words, the meanings, the *Āgamas* and Treatises, the extensive *Bhārata* poem and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, also taught his disciples.' St. A. 28.

This man was a *sātvata* (A. 27) worshipper of Vāsudeva (A, 1). So the *Āgamas* he had learnt were probably some *Pāñcarātra-saṃhitās*. Devotee of Viṣṇu, he had established an image of Viṣṇu in śaka 917 (995 A.D.) and was giving one village together with land, workers, cows and furnitures. One son of him, an ascetic (*yati*), was deeply versed in the Śaivasiddhānta and established there one *liṅga* and one Vināyaka (A, 38, 41). So this one used surely the *śaivāgama* ritual. We know by these facts there was no sectarian opposition between those recognised the same and unique supreme Being under the *mūrti* of their predilection, either Viṣṇu or Śiva. That is ordinarily considered as an evidence of syncretism but, in any way Viṣṇu is included in the Śaiva religion and the Tradition of the *smārta* brāmaṇas in India has been liberal all along the centuries. That is why the *Rāmāyaṇa* is accepted by both the *vaiṣṇava* and *śaiva*, in spite of the facts Rāma is Viṣṇu and Rāvaṇa a devotee of Śiva. That is also why Tulsīdās, at the beginning of every *kāṇḍ* of his *Rāmacaritmānas*, invokes first Śiva (k.1, 2, 3), then Rāma with Lakṣmaṇa (k. 4), Hari in the shape of Rāma (k. 5), Rāma as Lord of Gods (*sureś*) and Śaṅkara as Lord of Kāśī (k. 6), finally Rāma as Lord of Jānakī and Śaṅkara as Ambikā's husband (k. 7), God, for him, being essentially unique.

Two more inscriptions of Cambodia, both badly damaged are mentioning the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

One from Prāsāt Barmei (K. 744)[11] which belongs to circa 1000 śaka (1078 A.D.) according to which 'the explanation of stories from *Rāmayana* (once more with *na* instead of *ṇa*), *Bhārata* etc. . ' (. . rāmāyaṇabhāratādikathāvivaksa . . .st.4)[12]. The other one, little later (end of 11th century A.D.) emanates from a Yogīśvara paṇḍita, *hotar* of Jayavarman VIth (1080-1107 A.D.).

At the beginning of the 13th century, one of the numerous inscriptions for dedications to deities at the Prah-khan of Angkor, ordered by Jayavarman VIIth, though a Buddhist king are devoted to Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā.[13]

In Java, the epigraphy, like in Cambodia, gives at least one evidence of *Rāmāyaṇa*'s recitation, in a festival at the occasion of a foundation. Two copper-plates, designated as Copper-plates of Sangsang are preserved in Amsterdam. One of these, mentions a foundation at Wukajana and indicates: 'Si jaluk recited the *Rāmāyana*, blowing flutes and making buffoonry' (IInd plate verse, 10)[14]. *Rāmāyaṇa* is written with °*na* instead of °*ṇa* like often in Cambodian epigraphy. The date of the inscription is circa 830 śaka, 908 A.D.[15]

So at that time was prefigurated the use in festivals which has been developed in Indonesia till our own time in spite of the turning of the country of Islam.

Archaelogical evidences

In the old Campā[16], the country where the most ancient epigraphical references to the *Rāmāyaṇa* stories, have been found, we find also some representations of these stories in sculptures in the monuments. These sculptures are later than the inscriptions we have already referred to. They constitute a series of bas-reliefs on a basement of sand-stone. One of these bas-reliefs bears an hardly decipherable line in old Cam language and writing probably belonging to the beginning of the 10th century. The original location of the piece is not known but it has been found in the region of Mi-son and Tra-Kieu and the style of the sculptors is characteristic of the 'Tra-Kieu style'. One big monkey is represented bewcen two archers, all three standing. Separated from them by plants, one unidentified man is also standing. On another bas-relief one fighting monkey has seized one man and is going to throw him away. The old Cam line is above this figuration. On a third bas-relief appears one lady seemingly tied by one foot and seated on the edge of one stone seat. Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Sītā and one of the monkeys associated with Rāma could be recognised.

In Cambodia the illustrations in stone of *Rāmāyaṇa* episodes are numerous. They alternate in many Khmer monuments with illustrations of *Bhārata* and *Purāṇa* stories, i.e. from the same texts which, according to the inscriptions, were prescribed for recitations in temples and festivals, as well as the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

These sculptures appear in bas-reliefs on walls of big temples as it is the case at Angkor Vat, but chiefly in smaller compositions on pediments and lintels. They are also used, again on walls, as elements of decorative motives. They consist rarely in statues in ronde-bosse. In modern times the figurations are existing in wood-carvings, paintings, hide-figures for shadow-play and masks for masked-play and dancing.

Some stories are common to the *Rāmāyaṇa* and to other texts, like the 'churning of the Ocean', famous in *Mahābhārata* and in all the classical Sanskrit literature. In this case it is not always possible to ascertain which particular text has been a source for the artist's inspiration. Not only there are in Sanskrit numerous stories of Rāma other than Vālmīki's version, but also there are in India *Rāmāyaṇas* in various languages and, in Cambodia too, several versions in Khmer language. So the Khmer iconography of Rāma stories may have various imported or locally elaborated sources. We may sometimes distinguish among these ones with probability and be able to ascertain a precise origin to such or such figurations. But we are sure the Vālmīki's Sanskrit text has been the main original tool of propagation of the Rāmaic legends in South-East Asia.

From the very beginning we have got from the Sanskrit inscriptions verbatim quotations of this very text and formal prescriptions of reading it in ceremonies. The Sanskrit recitations cannot have been understood by the laymen of the country but we know the traditional way through which the communication of Sanskrit stories, as well as of Sanskrit religious teachings, are ordinarily propagated among uneducated peoples. Sanskrit has been for centuries the only link language well fixed by a regular grammatical teaching, available throughout India and Eastern Asia. Later, in all the area of the Theravāda Buddhism, Pāli has also played the role of link-language. Priests, monks and story-tellers receiving Sanskrit or Pāli texts from abroad, used probably, like they do even now, first to recite some verses from the basic text and then to explain and comment fluently in the mother-tongue of the public assemblies. Moreover, we are sure they kept, when talking, many words from the original texts, since we observe the modern national languages of the Indianized South-east Asia have borrowed a great deal of Sanskrit and Pāli words in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula (Burma, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia) and, of Sanskrit words only, in Indonesia.

If we want to enumerate the most important of the Rāmaic sculptures found in Cambodia, we must follow a chronological order, but this order will not indicate a progressive evolution of the knowledge of the Rāma-story in the country : the whole theme has been received at the very beginning. Actually details in the episodes have been diversified, by the variants in the stories, with the development of public telling. Evidently the sculptors have been more influenced by the popular variants than the authors of the Sanskrit inscriptions. That is why the iconography is more free and more significative of changes in the stories than may have been the epigraphy. Unfortunately we still ignore the dates of the first appearings of this changes, because we only know the period of composition of the *Rāmakerti*, 16th, 17th century, period which is later than the appearing of some pecularities referred to in this text, but already illustrated long before on older monuments.

The image in ronde-bosse of a standing archer is among a group of three Vaiṣṇava images of natural size found on the Phnom Da, in the South of Cambodia and anterior to the 7th century. It has been identified without any apparent reason with Lakṣmaṇa and is more probably an image of Rāma,[17] the most ancient so far discovered in Cambodia.

In the 10th century A.D., on the temple of Bantāy Srei we find one bas-relief representing Rāma shooting at Vālin when this one was fighting with Sugrīva[18]. An isolated subject is sometimes use simply as a central element of a piece of decoration. That is the case with Virādha carrying Sītā off (Vālm. *Araṇya*, 2),[19] on a lintel of the central tower. The identification with Rāvaṇa instead of Virādha has been proposed, but a very similar complete representation of the episode, including in addition Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa shooting at Virādha simultaneously, appears later in Angkor-Vat as we shall see.

The Bantāy Srei temple is Śaiva with three sanctuaries: the main and central one for the linga, on its right side for Brahman and on the left for Viṣṇu. The most important inscription K. 842,[20] has been engraved in 968 A.D. on the temple founded in 967 A.D. The cult was āgamic. He had been ordered by two brothers bearing Vaiṣṇavite names, Yajñavarāha and Viṣṇukumāra (st. 27) but who were Śaiva devotees as it is evidenced by many stanzas of the same inscription. Viṣṇukumāra had specially studied *Śivasaṃhitā* and *Pārameśvara* together with the grammatical *Kāsikāvṛtti* (st. 30). The *Pārameśvara* is a *śaivāgama* well known in the Indian tradition. Being now no more available it is represented by a *Mātaṅgapārameśvarāgama*.[21] Another inscription at

Phnoṃ Sandak (K. 191) dated 1110 A.D. begins with two stanzas in *kāvya* style which are illuminated by a teaching of this Mataṅga.[22]

The inscription of Bantāy Srei does not refer to the *Rāmāyaṇa* but the temple itself gives evidences of the popularity of Rāma's stories in their milieu.

The fight between Vālin and Sugrīva is also represented by a huge ronde-bosse in the Phnom Penh Museum, found at Prāsāt Ceṅ (10th cent.) in the Koh-ker group of Monuments.[23]

In the middle of the 11th century, at Vat Ek Phnoṃ, Sītā is represented in a garden of Laṅkā, in the custody of two Rākṣasīs, while Hanumant behind her back brings the Rāma's ring.[24]

In the second half of 11th century, at Baphuon (C. 1060 A.D.), we find Rāma comforting Sugrīva.[25]

Shortly later the temple of Pimay (written Bimāya, in epigraphy Vimāya) has been built on the Korat Plateau (now in Thailand). The temple has been completed in the end of the 11th century though it received several additions later, under the reign of Jayavarman VII. There are three Buddhistic, Śaivite and Rāmaite reliefs. Among the main figurations are Śiva as King of Gods (*devarāja*), the Gods being Brahman, Indra and Viśṇu represented below him,[26] Śiva dancing with Kāraikkālammaiyār at his feet and also *Rāmāyaṇa* war reliefs.[27] One lintel represents Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa tied with magical snakes by Indrajit (Vālm. Yuddhak. XLV foll.). These reliefs belong to the original building (c. 1085).

In the 12th century the most impressive *Rāmāyaṇa* reliefs found io South-east Asia are at Angkor Vat. They have been sculptured during the first half of this century, under Sūryavarman II or early after his death. They have been fully reproduced by the Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient in the publication, in seven volumes, of a full description of the temple.[28] They have also been described by George Coedès[29] and occasionally by many other authors few years ago. The Ecole française d'Extrème-Orient, Paris, collected new photos of these reliefs.

Those concerning various episodes of the Rāma's stories are located in the North-western pavilion at the angle of the Northern and Western galleries and on the wall of the Northern wing of the Western gallery. Some are separate from the others in the South Western pavilion. The churning of the Ocean occupies the South wing of the Eastern gallery. Also, as Coèdes has noticed in his ' Second study ', many times the central figures of various episodes are engaged in the decoration of small surfaces of basements, pillars, doors, etc . . . . That is a development of the decorative use of elements of scenes we have already noticed with Virādha carrying Śitā off at Bantāy Srei. At Angkor Vat small personages are each one in a medaillion and the medaillions are arranged on a floral background in such a way they formed one scene like 'churning of the ocean', 'Vālin's murder' or ' Agreement between Rāma and Vibhīṣaṇa.' Episodes from the Bhārata or other sources are also represented in the same way.

The reliefs located in North-West pavilion and reproduced are : Gods inviting Viṣṇu (pl. 325-328)—Sītā's svayaṃvara (pl. 332-337)—Virādha's murder (pl. 320)—Kabandha's murder (pl. 328)—Hanumant visiting Sītā at Lankā (pl. 343-344)—Alliance with Vibhīṣaṇa (pl. 345)—Sītā's ordeal (pl. 349-350)—Rāma's return on Puṣpaka flying-car (pl. 346-348). In the South-West pavilion we find : Mārīca's murder (pl. 288-289)[30]—Vālin's murder (pl. 300-304).

The study of the representations of the gods inviting Viṣṇu has give to François Martini the opportunity to establish that was already existing the tradition about the Gods which has been expressed later, in the 16th century in the *Rāmakerti*[31] In the period around the middle of the 12th century other Rāmaite reliefs have been engraved at Thommanon and Bantāy Samrè. But the most important group of representations remains those of Angkor Vat.

Besides the significant relief analysed by Martini we find there the two largest ones, one of which is also very significant.

Laṅkā's battle (West. gall. North wing) is the biggest scene and the most animate with the prowesses of the monkeys against the rākṣasas (pl. 471-496). The churning of the ocean (pl. 351-373) illustrates a story slightly different from the Vālmīki's version. One big monkey, not mentioned in the Sanskrit text is helping to pull the tail of Vāsuki (pl. 367).[32] It has been tentatively identified in various ways. But his presence cannot be simply a Khmer addition, because there is one allusion to the presence of Vāli, i.e. Vālin, at the churning in the Tamil *Rāmāyaṇa* of Kambar, almost certainly a contemporary of the Khmer bas-relief. Kambar in his *Kitkindā kāṇdam* (3rd, paṭalam, st. 38) and his *Sundara kāṇḍam*[33] (5th paṭalam, st. 30 or 31 according to the different editions), alludes to the strength of Vāli churning himself the ocean, after having removed both devas and asuras, by moving the Mandaram used as a churning stick with the snake as rope. The full story is not given by Kambar but is told in another South Indian text (existing in two versions, one in Sanskrit, *Kāñcimāhātmya*,[34] the other in Tamil, *Kāñcippurāṇam*) gives more details on the tradition about Vālin's participation to the churning. After separate vain attempts of the asuras and of the devas to move the Mandara mount as the churning stick, the devas required Vālin for help. He agreed and said to devas and asuras to join all together for pulling Vāsuki from the head. He placed himself at the tail but his traction was too strong and Mandara was bent to him. Then the Kūrma consolidated the mount and Vālin himself, seizing Vāsuki on both sides of the mount churned alone.[35]

The representation at Angkor Vat is in accordance with Vālmīki, *Mahābhārata* etc . . . . in representing the asuras placed on the side of the head and the devas on the side of the tail. It is also in accordance with a moment of the South Indian story in placing at the tail a big monkey who cannot be none else than Vālin.

We have no indication about the time of the composition of the *Kāñcimāhātmya*. We know merely it has been a source for the Tamil poet Civañānacuvāmi, author of the *Kāñcippurāṇam*. This poet died in 1785.[36] He was in the Tiruvāvaṭuturai ātīnam.[37] That means he belonged to the Kailāyaparamparai from which brāhmaṇas and pakkuvar (skr. *pakva*) have been established in Thailand and Cambodia not before the 14th century.[38] In this conditions it is evident the introduction at Angkor Vat of Vālin as participating to the churning of the ocean results from a much earlier communication with South India and the allusion of Kambar to the final phase of the churning by Vālin alone supposes the existence in India before the 12th century of the full story later told in the *Kāñcimāhātmya* and the *Kāñcippurāṇam*. But the coming of peoples of the Kailāyaparamparai has been able to reinforce the popularity in Thailand and Cambodia of the stories of Rāma. In these countries the shadow theater has been much developed at least during the last centuries, like probably more anciently in Malaysia and Indonesia. In Thailand the shadow play called *Nang* is allied to or, possibly, a source of the masked play or *Khōn*. Both are playing Rāma's stories.[39] In South India also two kings of similar plays are still performed though on the way of disparition. They are called in Telugu *Bommalāṭa* for the puppets show, and *Tōl bommalāṭa* for the shadow play. In Tamilnad the name is *Pāvaikkūttu*. There the puppets (*pāvai*) are of skin and similar to those of the Indonesian *Wayang kulit* but thinner and transparent. Reciprocal influences are very probable in these plays. In any way, The Rāma—stories are still now everywhere very popular.

In Ancient Indonesia where we have seen the epigraphy has preserved the evidence of the popularity, of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which is also given in an Old Javanese version, the sculpture has also supplied concrete evidences which have been studied by several authors and specially by W. F. Stutterheim.[40] But owing to the conversion of Malaysia and Indonesia to Islam representations of Rāma's storie are preserved only in the various kinds of *wayang* or ' plays '.

On the contrary in Thailand and Cambodia the representations of the Rāma's stories have always continued to be used in religious and official buildings. The final adoption of the Theravāda Buddhism in the place of Mahāyānaic Buddhism or Śaivisim has not involved any disaffection to the *Rāmāyaṇa*. In the last period of the kingdom of Angkor, under the reign of Jayavarman VII, not only, as we have seen, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā are referred to in one Prah Khan's inscription but also, it seems probable, according to an hypothesis of Bernard-Philippe Groslier, that the reliefs of the first floor of the Bayon repesent episodes of the life of the king in a way evoking a parallel with the epic of Rāma.[41]

After Jayavarman VII, a Mahāyānist king, Śaivism superseded again the Mahāyāna religion before being replaced by the Theravāda Buddhism. Since this time, episodes of the *Rāmāyaṇa* have been used to illustrate the Buddhist monasteries as well as Indo-Khmer temples in the antecedent period. But, as the building in stone became rare, the sculptures have been ordinarily in wood. Nevertheless at Vat Kdol (Battambang) the western part of the enclosure of the monastery is decorated on both faces with long panels in relief representing scenes of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The wood panels and the paintings which have been used till our days have been described in the last book we have to mention by Madelemegitean.[42] They are generally based on the *Rāmakerti* version or on the Thai version, *Rāmakien*.

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[1] Cf. Jean Filliozat, *Pline et le Malaya*, Journal Asiatique, 1974, p. 119-130 and *The oldest-sea-routes of the Tamil trade*, in Bulletin of the Institute of Traditional Cultures, Madras, 1976, p. 22-23. Also J. Andrè and J. Filliozat, *Pline l'Ancien, Histoire naturelle, livre VI*, 2*nd* part., Paris, 1980, cf. Index.

[2] J. Filliozat, *L'inscription dite de Vo-canh*, BEFEO, LV, 1969, p. 107-116 plates VIXI.

[3] Paul Mus, *Etudes indiennes et indochinoises, I. L'inscription* ā *Vālmīki de Prakāsadharma* (*Tra-Kieuś* BEFEO, XXVIII, 1928, n⁰1-2 (1929), p. 147-152.

[4] Probably to be read *brahmābhipūjitam.*

[5] Cf. Edouard Huber. *Etudes indochinoises l,La légende du Rāmāyaṇa en Annam*, BEFEO, V, 1905, p. 168.

[6] A. Barth, *Inscriptions sanscrites du Combodge*, Paris, 1885, p. 30.

[7] Cf. Plates, vol. I, Plate 11.

[8] G. Coedès, *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, t. III, Paris, 1951, p. 47.

[9] Inscr. du Cambodge, vol. I, p. 84 and 115 f.n.1. The hymn AV IV, 8 is used when preparing water for a king entitled to receive *abhiṣeka, Kauśikasūtra*, 17.1. It is called *abhiṣekagaṇa* in *Ath. Paris*. 34.30.

[10] L. Finot, BEFEO, XXVIII, p. 58 foll.

[11] G. Coedès, *Inscr. du Camb.*, *t*.VI, 1954, p. 216.

[12] *Ibid.*, t. 4, 1952, p. 188.

[13] G. Coedes, BEFEO, XLIX (07) p. 114. Inscr. n°K 637.

[14] Cf. Himansu Bhusan Sarkar, *Corpus of the Inscriptions of Java*, Calcutta, 1972, vol. II, p. 90 (text) and 96 (transl.).

[15] Cf. Louis Charles Damais, *Répertoire onamastique de l'epigraphie javanaise*, Publ. EFEO, vol. LXVI, Paris 1970, p. 52, n°142, text p. 240.

[16] Jean Boisselier, *La statuaire du Champa*, Publ. EFECO, vol. LIV, Paris 1963, p. 191-192, pl. 115-117.

[17] P. Dupont, *La statuaire préangkorienne*, Artibus Asial, Ascona, 1955. p. 30-31, pl. VI B.—Rectification : K. Bhattacharya, *Les religions brahmaniques dans l.ancien Cambodge*, Publ. EFEO, vol. XLIX, Paris, 1961, p. 113 and J. Boisselier, *Manuel d'archêologie d'Extrême-Orient*, *Asie du Sud-East*, t. 1, *Le Cambodge*, Paris, 1966, p. 285.

[18] M. Giteau, *Les Khmers*, 1965, p. 230 and 37 (fragment); J. Boisselier, *Le Cambodge*, 1966, pl. LVI.

[19] Illustration in B.-Ph Groslier, *Angkor*, 1965, pl. 30.

[20] G. Coedès, *Inscr. du Cambodge*, vol. 1, p. 147, foll.

[21] Ed. Kṛṣṇaśātrin, 1924 and, with the commentary of Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha by N. R. Bhatt, Pondicherry, 1977.

[22] For Ph. Sandak inscr. Coedès, *Incr. du Camb.*, vol. 6, p. 301, for *Matangap.*° IV, 58-59 (J. Filliozat, *Sur le śivaisme et le boudhisme du Cambodge ā propos de deux livres récents*, in the press).

[23] J. Boisselier, *Manuel d'archéologie d'Extrême-Orient. Le Cambodge*, 1966, pl. LVI, 1.

[24] Groslier, *Indochine, Carrefour des Arts*, p. 123, Giteau, Angkor, p. 88.

[25] Giteau, *Angkor*, p. 118.

[26] Pierre Pichard, Pimay. *Etude architecturale du temple*, Paris, 1976, photo 13.

[27] J. J. Boeles, *A Rāmāyaṇa relief from the Khmer sanctuary at Pimay in North-East Thailand, in Journal of the Siam Society*, LVII-1, 1969, p ; 163-178, Pichard. Ph. 10.

[28] *Le Temple d'Angkor Vat*, *Mémoires archéologiques*, Tome II (7 volumes. Folio), Paris, 1929-1932. The reproduction of the bas-reliefs occupy 3 vol.-plates 287-608.

[20] G. Coedès, *Les bas-reliefs d'Angkor-Vat*, in Bulletin de la Commission archèologique de l'Indochine, vol. 2, 1911, p. 171-220. *Eutdes cambodgiennes VII. Seconde étude sur les bas-reliefs d'Angkor Vat*, Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, t. 13, 1, 0. 1-5, 10 plates.

[30] Also M. Giteau, *Angkor*, p. 57, 1976.

[31] *En marge du Rāmāyaṇa cambodgien* in Bull. Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, t. XXXVIII, 2, 1938, p. 285-295, pl. 95—Same title in Journal Asiatique 1950, p. 81-90. *Quelques notes sur le Reamker*, in Artibus Asiae, vol. XXIV, p. 351.

[32] Also H. Marchal, *Angkor*, 1955, p. 175, B.Ph. Groslier, *Angkor*, 1965, pl. 8,

[33] Ed. Annamalai University, For Sundarakāṇḍam french translation by Gnanou Diagou, *Ramayana de Kambar, Sundara kandam*, Pondicherry, 1972, p. 103.

[34] Edition in Telugu characters, Śrīkurveṭinagaram, 1889, Ms. on palm leaves, grantha writing, copy achieved on 24.10.1810. Cf. R. Dessigane, P. Z. Pattabiramin and J. Filliozat, *Les légendes civaites de Kāñcipuram*, Pondicherry, 1964, p. VI-X.

[35] *Kāñcipurāṇam*, XII, 9-19, cf. *les légendes* . . . . p. 18. *Kāñcīmāhātmya*, adhyāya VIII-IX.

[36] Ed. Ci. Aruṇaivaṭivelu, Kāñcipuram, 1937, p. 25.

[37] Same edition, title ; tiruvāvaṭuturai ātīṉam civaṉānacuvāmikaḷ aruḷicceyta Kāñcippurāṇam.

[38] J. Filliozat, *Kailāsaparamparā*, in Felicitation Volumes of South-east Asian Studies presented to His Highness Prince Dhaninivat, Bangkok, 1965, vol. II pp. 241-247.

[39] R. Nicolas, le théâtre d'ombres au Siam, in Journal of the Siam Society vol. XXI, part 1 (1927) Prince Dhaninivat, *The Nang*, Bangkok, 1954 (3e. 1962) ; Prince Dhaninivat and Dhanit Yupho, The *Khon*, Bangkok, 1954 (3d. ed. 1962); Dhanit Yupho, *Khon masks*, Bangkok, 1960 (2d, ed. 1962).—J. Brunet, *Thémes and motifs of the Cambodian Rāmāyaṇa in the shadow theater*, in Traditional Drama and Music of South-east Asia ed. by Mohd. Taib. Osman, Kuala Lumpur, 1974, p. 3-4.

[40] W. F. Stutterheim, *Rāma-Legenden und Rāma Reliefs in Indonesian*: Munchen, 1925, 2 volumes.

[41] B.-Ph. Groslier, *Les inscriptions du Bayon* accompanying J. Dumarçay *Le Bayon. Histoire architecturale du temple*, Paris, 1973. Cf. pp. 177-182: *La vie du roi en tant que Rama.*

[42] Madeleine Giteau, *Iconographie du Cambodge post-angkorien*, Publ. EFEO vol. C, Paris, 1975, p. 266, photos 97-99.

THE RAMAYANA IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA: A GENERAL SURVEY

H. B. SARKAR

SCHOLARS of various countries have substantially contributed to the elucidation of problems raised by different versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* or aberrations thereof current in South-east Asia. These are of various dimensions and each one of them, whether in the form of big texts like the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Yogīśvara in Java, the *Rāma-kerti* of Kambuja, the *Rāmakien* of Thailand, the *Hikayat Seri Rama* of Malaya, etc., or smaller recensions in the form of wayang stories or lakons, have thrown up complex problems, the solution of which has defied, in many cases, the ingenuity of the best scholars. While it may be possible, in some cases at least, to find out the ultimate source of the deviations in the texts of the Rāma-stories of South-east Asia, the majority of them are likely to defy the challenge of scholarship for many years to come.

It is not necessary here to discuss the story of the growth of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in India. The critical edition of the story, as published from Baroda, has established the identity of four recensions known as the Northern, the Eastern, the Western Devanāgarī and the Southern recensions. Professor Jacobi has stated[1] that the Rāma saga originated in or in the vicinity of the kingdom of Kośala and then became more diffused in eastern India than in the South. Accepting the view that the story of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* assumed its present form between B.C. 400 and A.D. 200, we notice that the story set out for the lands of South-east Asia not long thereafter to find a permanent place for itself not only in texts and temples, but also in the heart of the people. The reasons for this attraction must have been the permanent values of life enshrined in the story, such as the fraternal love, adherence to truthfulness, steadfastness to duty, devotion of husband and wife to each other and the ultimate triumph or righteousness and truth over evils, besides many others distributed over various *kāṇḍas* or divisions of the epic. To these were added the fantasies of the grotesque figures of the rākṣasas (demons) and the monkeys which enthralled the simple folks of all countries.

If we make a general survey of the whole scene of South-east Asia from the view-point of an historian for the first few centuries of the Christian era, there is not much difficulty in understanding the fact that the earliest stream of the Rāma saga flowed towards South-east Asia with the priestly class, the Brahmin and the Kṣatriya adventurers, traders and others, who sailed down the course of the river Ganges and the coastal belt of the Bay of Bengal. Beyond the port of Tāmralipti, the voyagers went to Subarṇabhūmi, as the *Jātakas* tell us, or further still, to Canton, across the Malay Peninsula, by foot or by sailing through what later on came to be known as the Strait of Malacca.[2] The earliest migrants sailed from Bengal, Bihar, Kaliṅga and contiguous tracts of Vidarbha. The arrival of Brahmins[3] and embassies strengthened this tie between North India and Funan-Kambuja. The influence of the Gupta school of art was a visible symbol of this cultural and political contact.[4] I mention all these facts to indicate that the first impulse in the migration of the Rāma saga came from that region, whence the earliest migrants had gone to the Far East.

The story early developed in those areas which lay on the routes of communication to the Far East. The sea-belt from Takuapa in southern Thailand to Kedah, both overlooking the Bay of Bengal, must have seen voyagers either crossing the transpeninsular route to catch ships at ports on the eastern coast of Malaya or waiting for the arrival of proper monsoon. In the later case, the travellers had to pass their idle months in enjoying Indian dance and music by maidens which were appreciated in such royal courts of Malaya as Ch'ih-tu, for instance, which lay on the route to China[5] and where lived hundreds of Brahmins, as the Chinese texts tell us.[6] The Kedah-Patani and the Perak-Patani transpeninsular routes ended not far off from the places where lay the kingdom of Ch'ih-tu and the state of Langya. It is the halting stations like these lying on the trade-route and the Indianized royal courts which provided the initial impulse for the early diffusion of the Rāma saga in South-east Asia.

One such locality was Langya, referred to above, which lay near modern Patani, and the contiguous tracts known as Kelantan, all of which figure in Chinese and Arabic texts and nautical charts. It is certainly significant that the great concentration of dalangs or puppeteers is to be found in the Kelantan region. In the state of Lingya, better known in later Chinese records as Langkasuka, there was a king called Bhagadatta, whose letter to the Chinese emperor in A.D. 515[7] seems to indicate that at least episodes connected with the uprooting of the hill Gandhamādana, with its medicinal herbs by Hanumān, to revive the dying Lakṣmaṇa in Laṅkā were well-known. As the letter also says that ' the precious Sanskrit is generally known ', my inference may be valid. If this be so, this is the only veiled reference to the *Rāmāyaṇa* in pre-Islamic Malaya.

Although Funan and Langkasuka were the earliest Indianized states of South-east Asia, records bearing on Funan do not yield any trace of the prevalence of the Rāma saga in that country. Kambuja was its successor state. We are told that in Kambuja a copy of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, a complete copy of the *Mahābhārata* and an un-named *Purāṇa* were recited daily before the deity of the Tribhuvaneśvara temple in c. 598 A.D.[8] Inscriptional references from Campā indicate that at least some episodes from the Bālakāṇḍa were known in the reign of king Prakāśadharma (c. 653-79) [9]. Indeed, the Tra kieu inscription of this reign pointedly refers to the famous episode of the *krauñca*-pair and to the foundation of a temple dedicated to Vālmīki.[10] There are pre-Nāgarī inscriptions of eastern India pertaining to the reign of king Yaśovarman of Kambuja (889-900) and some of these are written in the Gauḍī-style.[11] In one inscription reference has been made to the name of the poet Pravarasena and his work entitled *Setubandha* or *Rāvaṇa-vadha*.[12] Although it is written in Prakrit, in fifteen cantos, it is modelled on Sanskrit *kāvya*-style. It is a pity that, although this text was current in Kambuja in the ninth century A.D., it has not yet been compared with the *Rāmāyaṇa*-tradition preserved in the Angkor Vat. Baphuon and other temples. Be that as it may, other inscriptional references from this reign prove that at least certain episodes from the Kiṣkindhā-kāṇḍa and the Uttarakāṇḍa were also known.[13] In the middle of the tenth century, when king Rājendravarman was the ruler of Kambuja, his inscriptions not only refer to episode from the Ayodhyākāṇḍa,[14] but also from the Araṇyakāṇḍa.[15] We can then say that by the tenth century, all the Kāṇḍas of the *Rāmāyaṇa* or parts thereof, excluding perhaps the Sundarakāṇḍa, had become known to the people of that country.

II

For the historian who seeks to trace the fountain-head of cultural contacts on the basis of dated references to bald facts, the trouble is mainly over, but that of the art and literary critic really begins, as the noble monuments of the Angkorean period in Kambuja and others in the Prambanan valley in central Java begin to appear, even as Yogīśvara's Old Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa*. A Sanskrit inscription already refers to Rāghava in A.D. 732,[16] while the Old-Javanese inscriptions[17] present the names of Ravana (824),[18] Langka (862),[19] Ayuddha as the name of a person (879),[20]Bharata (879),[21] Rama (880 ?)[22], Laghava (=Raghava, 907)[23], Ramayana (907),[24] Sita (910),[25] Vali (928)[26] and Laksaṇa (928).[27] The names seem to indicate knowledge about some heroes, heroine and place-name of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in dated inscriptions after Bālaputradeva, the last Śailendra ruler of central Java, had left the island in A.D. 856. This is an interesting matter to dilate on, but it is difficult to say if we can link it up with the date of the monument at Prambanan. In any case, we shall not certainly overstep the limits of prudence if we postulate the view that, in the second half of the ninth century, there was an oral version of the Rāma saga which did not know—to judge by the names—the Bālakāṇḍa and the Uttarakāṇḍa. This does not exhaust the possibility of a version of the saga older than Yogīśvara's, but now lost. It seems however that the last as well as the most significant tribute to the saga occurs in inscriptions from the reign of king Girindravardhana (A.D. 1486), when images of Rāma and Bharadvāja were set up on the occasion of a twelvth-year funeral ceremony of the deceased king of Dahanapura[27a]. The *Rāmāyaṇa*-story of Java is connected with several texts and temples, as well as enthralling wayang stories. The Old-Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa* of Yogīśvara (this was possibly his spiritual title) runs into 26 cantos, written in different Sanskrit metres, with a mastery of style and *alaṁkāra* (embellishment) which has never been excelled in Old-Javanese literature.[28] In spite of certain archaisms, which seem to indicate influence of an earlier written version of the Rāma saga, I adhere to my earlier view that it was composed towards the end of the eleventh century A.D.[29], though others place it in the early part of the tenth. It is extremely difficult for me to imagine that such a poem, the greatest among the Old-Javanese *kakawins* or poetical works, could have suddenly appeared, like Minerva, armed at all points, from an earlier period, when only one poem of not even half the competence of Yogīśvara's work has come down to us.[30] The text was based, up to the middle of the sixteenth canto, on the Sanskrit *Bhaṭṭikāvya*, but the source of the remaining portion has not been yet determined.[31] The *Uttarakāṇḍa* of Java is, however, an independent work, written in Old-Javanese prose, handling the themes of its Sanskrit counterpart,[32]. Other stories of the *Rāmāyaṇa*-cycle includes the *Sumanasāntaka*,[33] the *Hariśraya*,[34] the *Arjunavijaya*,[35] etc.

I shall now say something about the temple-reliefs of Java, depicting the *Rāmāyaṇa*-theme. The most famous of these refers to the Lara Jonggrang temple in the Prambanan valley (c. 9th-10th century). The panels begin in a horizontal series at the main temple, depicting scenes from the Bālakāṇḍa upto the arrival of the monkeys in Lankā. These were continued in the neighbouring Brahmā temple,[36] but only detached fragments have been found. There are, however, episodes which do not occur in Valmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, indicating thereby the existence of other traditions coming from India. In the great days of the Lara Jonggrang and Barabudur monuments, the major part of Java[37] was known as Holing, i.e., Kaliṅga, and it will perhaps be paying to consider if there were similar traditions in that part of India. The tardy progress of archaeological exploration in Kaliṅga and the consignment of hundreds of sculptures under the open sky have been deterrant factors in studying Kaliṅga's ties with South-east Asia in this field. In East Java, the temple of Panataran from the fourteenth-fifteenth century also depicts scenes from the Yuddhakāṇḍa of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but the emphasis is here on the wayang-style.

Let us now have a look at the major temple-reliefs in the mainland of South-east Asia. The magnificent temple-reliefs at

Angkor Vat present the most sumptuous representations of the story. The temple was constructed by king Sūryavarman II (1112-1152). The *Rāmāyaṇa*-sculptures are depicted in the North-western corner of the complex. Eyes do not find rest here on seeing almost endless scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Purāṇas*, etc. So far as the reliefs of Prambanan, Angkor Vat, Baphuon and Panataran are concerned, it will appear that many episodes considered important in the work of Vālmīki have been omitted in places and some new ones inducted. It can be said with confidence that the Javanese sculptors have depicted the earlier part of the *Rāmāyaṇa* as elaborately as the Khmer sculptors the later part. It would have been most interesting to find out how the Uttarakāṇḍa is dealt with if at all, in the Prambanan reliefs. The omission of Uttarakāṇḍa would have brought Yogīśvara's work structurally closer to the Prambanan reliefs in spite of their variations.

The later recensions of the Malayo-Indonesian world form a cluster by themselves. The principal ones among them are the *Serat Kaṅḍa*, the *Ramayana Sasak*, the *Rama Kling*, the *Rama Kidung Bali*, the *Rama Tambang*, the Malay *Hikayat Seri Rama*, etc. The last mentioned book has points of contact with the later *Rāmayāṇa* versions of Indonesia. A comparative study of some of these texts with one another and with the Malay *Hikayat Seri Rama* was made by W. F. Stutterheim in his well-known German work,[38] and this was summarised by me in outline in 1934.[39] Fortunately there are also Dutch and English text-versions of the Hikayat.[40] The valuable work of W. F. Stutterheim has been given further precision by Zieseniss, who thinks that the *Hikayat Seri Rama* ' represents a popular form of the Rāma saga which, seen from the point of view of time and content, is in every way post-epic, was carried by word of mouth to Indonesia between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries, partly from western and partly from eastern India, exists there in several versions. . . show an increasing degree of Indonesian levelling and alteration of the original sagas postulated. '[41]

In the mainland of South-east Asia, the Rāma saga also found moorings in the Buddhist countries. Burma being India's closest neighbour, the *Rāmāyaṇa* should have come to this country much earlier than in any other place, but at present the assumption for the currency of such stories in Burma is provided by the images of Rāma and Paraśurāma in the eleventh-century temples of Pagan. Some scholars believe, however, that after the fall of Pagan towards the close of the thirteenth century, the story was transmitted orally from generation to generation, and an echo of this is reflected in the reference to the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the Burmese Pyo (*Jātaka*-poem) of 1527, in which the Buddhist monk-poet Shin Agga Thamadi warned his fellow-monks not to tell the stories of Sītā and Hanumān in public, but the position was reversed in the eighteenth century, when several books were composed, showing popularity of the story from the Bālakāṇḍa to the Yuddhakāṇḍa. Increasing popularity of the saga is noticeable since the last century.

In contiguous Thailand, there is hardly any proof regarding the prevalence of the Rāma saga in the ancient period. In the Ayutthaya period (1409-1767) the *Rāmakien*, i.e. Ramakirti became very popular, and kings came to be known after the name of the principal hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Even the capital of Thailand came to be known as Ayutthaya, i.e., Ayodhyā, just like its counterpart Jog jakarta in central Java. The *Ramakien* has seven kāṇḍas, as in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyana*. In the reign of Rāma I and some members of the court jointly produced Thai *Rāmāyaṇa* in 50,286 verses, but this being too bulky for the stage—because that was the original aim—the poem was reduced to 14300 verses.[42] The story was further reduced in bulk in later times. A comparison of this text with the Indian one has revealed the fact that the former broadly agrees with Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, while major deviations occur in regard to the origins and genealogies of the main figures and in some stories lying in the background of the Uttarakāṇḍa. Although no ealier texts of the *Rāmāyaṇa* were found in Thailand, many scenes of the story were depicted in temples of the Lopburi epoch. Particularly popular were the scenes portraying Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in *nāga-pāśa* or noose of snakes and the building of the causeway to Laṅkā. There are also other scenes. Many might have been destroyed during the Burmese sack of the Thai capital in 1767. The most gorgeous scenes were depicted in the temple of the Emerald Buddha in the nineteenth century. One has to pass today corridor after corridor, where the eyes feast on these glorious scenes.

In the neighbouring country of Laos, which is closely connected with Thailand in language and other cultural matters, there are two versions of the Rāma saga, of which one text called *Phra Lak Phra Lam* has been published with text and introduction.[43] Another version, much smaller, is called *Khvay Thuraphi*. In the former text, Rāvaṇa, called here Raphanasuan, is a more dominant personality than Lam or Rāma, whose son is Hullaman or Hanuman. The monkey-hero assumes human form at the end. The marriage of Nang Sida (Sītā) and Lam after the challenge of bow-lifting the episode of the golden deer, the story of abduction of Nang Sida are all there, but there has been major induction of Lao elements. The story has been conceived in the pattern of a Buddhist *Jātaka*-story. The second version of the story is still remoter from Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*. One of the versions of the Rāma saga has been painted in the temple of Vat Pa Ke. These texts seem to have been composed in the last 150 years. Native history seem to have been woven into the texture of the story. The story of the *Phra Lak Phra Lam* has been painted in 29 murals on the walls of the Vat Oub Mṇong temple. There is also current a late Rāma story in Annamite version localised in modern Vietnam region.[44] In the neighbouring country of Kambuja, the sway of the later versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* was no less significant. We have here the *Ramakerti*, lit. Rāma's fame, which stands closer to Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* than to the Thai version of the story, but still the differences are wide enough.

IV

We shall now bring under our review the shadow-plays, which have been greatly responsible for the popularity of the Rāma-saga in the countries of S.E. Asia. The shadow-plays are believed by many to have migrated from southern India. Indeed, Nīlakaṇṭha in his commentary on the occurrence of the term *rūpopa-jīvanam* in the *Mahābhārata* (XII, CCXCV, 5) says: "*rūpopajīvanam jalamaṇḍapiketi dākṣiṇātyesu prasiddham, yatra sūkṣmavastram vyavadhāya carmamairākārai rājāmātyādīnām caryā pradarśyate.*" Though we do not know the details adequately, it seems to be a prototype of the Javanese wayang play, because we find here both the canvas and the leathern puppets. The reference is earlier than the oldest reference to it in Javanese records, but the *termini* *technici* of Java are entirely of non-Sanskritic origin. Many scholars however believe that this is no conclusive proof regarding the indigenous origin of the shadow-plays of Java, as many modern terms coming from the West are being rendered into native parlance with astonishing rapidity in both South and South-East Asia. It seems therefore not unlikely that the Sanskrit *chhāyānāṭaka* is the analogue of the Javanese wayang purva. Besides the wayang purva, other categories of Javanese shows are (1) the wayang gedog, which is differentiated from the rest by the repertoire (2) the wayang kelitik or kerucil, in which wooden puppets are represented (3) the wayang golek, in which clothed round puppets are shown (4) the topeng, which is presented by masked persons (5) the wayang wong, in which actors are not masked and they themselves speak (6) the wayang beber, in which plates portraying various scenes are unfolded.

The wayang literature of Java may be distributed over several well defined groups :

(*a*) Early history and mythology :
    Stories of gods and demons. A substantial portion of them is based upon the Adiparvan of the *Mahābhārata*.

(*b*) The Rama-cycle of stories :
    The ultimate source of these stories is the *Rāmāyaṇa*, though they are mainly based upon the *Serat Kanda* and the *Rama Keling*, the counterparts ot the Malay *Hikayats*.

(*c*) the Arjuna-sahasra-bāhu cycle of stories :
    These stories are based upon some personalities of the Rāma saga.

(*d*) The Pāṇḍava-cycle of stories :
    These stories are based upon the *Mahābhārata*. Some figures of the *Rāmāyaṇa* have also been mixed up with this Pāṇḍava-cycle.

The wayang purva deals with the stories relating to the earliest times of Javanese history. These consist not only of Old-Javanese or pure Mal-Polynesian myths, but also of Indian myths which have been worked up into the lakons, which term roughly corresponds to the Greek word for ' drama '.

The wayangs are very old in Java and seem to be mentioned in inscriptions. It is clearly mentioned for the first time in the Old-Javanese *kakavin* called *Arjunavivāha* composed in the eleventh century A.D., but there are reasons to believe that it was still earlier. The wayang literature of Java has, as shown above, four cycles of stories, of which one belongs to the Rāma-cycle and the other to the Arjunasahasrabāhu cycle. The time, energy and resources spent on these wayang-shows are considerable and these have now become the cultural heritage of mankind. In Indonesia, both the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* have served as inexhaustible quarries for the composition of stories called lakons. Many of these lakons draw their inspiration from the later versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It has been found, for example, from a comparison of the *Rama saweq wonten ing Mantildireja* with Javanese and Malay texts that the source of this lakon is the *Rāma Keling*. The story of the lakon begins after the marriage of *Rāma*. The story of Legutama similarly offers an account of the earlier history of Sugrīva and Suvali. The *Rāma Tambak*, the *Hanuman duta*, the *Rama Gandrung*, etc., belong to the class of wayang stories of the Rāma-cycle. There are numerous lakons of this type.[45] The wayang shows went from Java to Bali, but the Balinese puppeteers borrow their subjects directly from the poems and not from the *pakem* or prose extracts. It seems that the lakons are being still written in the peripheral areas of the epic stroies or what is known in Malay as *ranting* (twig). The stories are mainly indigenous, but the figures are from the Indian epics.

It is generally believed that the origin of the shadow-plays of Sumatra, Malacca and Riouw has to be traced to Java, but their themes are more connected with the *Hikayat Seri Rama* and other writings like the *Ken Tambuhan*, *Bidasari*, etc., than any other. The rituals followed before the opening of the wayang shows have prompted some scholars to think that the puppet-shadow cast on the screen really represents the ancestral spirit[46] and the plays serve as a means of contact between the living and the dead.[47] If one accepts this position and the thesis that the shadow-plays went from Java to Sumatra and Malaysia, the link with the spirit-world may legitimately be expected there also. Indeed, the *sajen*-offering to the spirits in the opening ceremony of the shows has its counterpart in the opening of the Malayan wayang shows.

Geographically located between Indonesia and Thailand, Malaya presents wayang shows which have adopted features from both, crystallised into wayang Java and wayang Siam. Many stories under the category of folk romances have also been influenced by the *Rāmāyaṇa* in which the occurrence of a few Old-Javanese words indicates the time when these terms were current. These might have been introduced into Malaya in the wake of shadow plays, some of which, particularly those at Patani, refer to the pre-Majapahitan repertoire. The link with Majapahitan Java is also reflected in other ways too. It has been observed that in Kelanten, the story of Rāma is still projected on the screen in a form 'so old that the puppets do not wear the creese of later shadow-plays from Majapahit.' The strucure of the story now bears the unmistakable stamp of its adaption, to present forms. It may be observed that the prophet Muhammad and the Hindu epic heroes are invoked by the puppeteers before the beginning of the show, giving the show a complexion of its past characteristic adapted for secular mass entertainment of a later period. In consonance with this spirit, Sheikh Muru'd-din who compiled the *Sarat al-Mustokim* in 1634 observed that 'the Malay version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* could be used for sanitary purposes, provided the name of Allah did not occur in it.' Thus, Indian gods and goddesses, heroes and heroines gallop through the names written in Arabic characters in a strange world under stranger circumstances.

The shadow-plays of Thailand are clearly mentioned in the records of the seventeenth century, but its repertoire was not limited, as now, to the story of Rāma. It is however remarkable that within a century, during the reign of king Boromakos (1732-1758) dramatic art saw its palmy days. Lakon and Khon, i.e., dance, drama and masked play made their definite debut. The shadow-play or *nang*, as it is called in Thailand, is always coached in the chabang metre and is known as the Kampak, which is recitative. *Nang* seems to have been derived from Java, perhaps through Malaya.[48] It has a religious cast, devised originally as a magical means of protection against evil spirits and closely linked up with ancestor-worship.[49]

V

It is proper that I shall now go into the question of the massive anomalies in the later versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in South-East Asia. These anomalies cannot be explained only by the proposition of other versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* current in India and which have flowed into South-East Asia in the trek of merchants and others. There were other compelling reasons also for these aberrations. There was, first of all, a loss of intimate contact of South-East Asia with India. The introduction of Islam in large parts of India and the taboo on sea-voyages rigorously enforced by the Hindu law-givers of India gradually loosened the live bond of Hindu India with the Hinduized states of South-East Asia. This is also reflected in the disappearance of Sanskrit as court language from large parts of South-East Asia. In Campā, for example, the last inscription written in Sanskrit is dated in 1253, in Kambuja around 1330, while in Indonesia the last one is dated in 1378. Besides, the caste-ridden structure of the Hindu society in South-East Asia was repugnant to the essentially democratic clan-life of the region. The gradual introduction of the Simhalese form of Buddhism in mainland South-East Asia[50] and of Islam in the Malayo-Indonesian world ushered in the great divine in the field of religious practices and the study of sacred texts. Many manuscripts were destroyed at the time of introduction of Islam in Java which was marked by fire and sword,[51] though much was also saved in the island of Bali. The same thing might have occurred in Sumatra and Malaya as well, but contemporary documentation is scant. The old language was also being forgotten and indifferent copying made matters more confusing. The materials to write on were the lontars or kropacs, corresponding to our palm-leaves, but the rough fibres did not allow easy flow of putting in dots and short lines of Arabic, as against writing in straighter parallel lines. The introduction of Islam, the Arabic script and imperfect or non-acquaintance with Old-Javanese script, which broke away from the late Brahmī script around A.D. 750, and with Hindu sacred literature in general made a mess of the Rāma saga in the new political, religious and social milieu of the Malayo-Indonesian world. In fact, the loss of literary moorings, which were attuned to Hindu cultural and religious ideals, was attended with violent convulsions, as described above. At the same time, the impact of

Islamic theology and literary ideals created an impossible situation : the old was dying, but the new was not yet born. The writers and creative artists therefore grouped to find light for the new age and out of the endeavour was born a new style of living, which does not reject the heritage of the past, but adapts it to suit the conditions of contemporary life. The stream of traditional life however continued in the island of Bali.

In the mainland of South-East Asia, the gradual adoption of Buddhism by all the states created almost a parallel situation. The knowledge of Hindu scriptures, including the Great Epics, gradually dwindled. The monks also, with varying degrees of success, frowned upon the use of the sacred Hindu texts or themes based upon them for public entertainment. These were however so popular that they had to be secularised, as in the adjacent island world. The universal appeal of the Rāma saga, to which I have invited attention at the beginning, has thus cut across race, religion, clime and age. It has been an adhesive force in society. The praiseworthy spirit of toleration in the Muslim and Buddhist countries is not only reflected in the preservation of the great monuments of older days depicting the *Rāmāyaṇa*-scenes, but also in the maintenance of this beautiful story in their school curricula.

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[1] *Das Rāmāyaṇa* (tr. S. N. Ghoshal, J.O.I. vol. VI, no. 4, p. 212).

[2] This line of route has been indicated in the *Ch'ien Han Shu*. For the text and translation of the relevant passage, vide P. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, pp. 8-9, 11.

[3] Apart from Kauṇḍiṇya I, his descendants and Kauṇḍiṇya II, reported in Chinese texts, there are others who have been mentioned in the Kambuja inscriptions, such as :

(*a*) Inscription of Western Baray, which refers to Śakrasvāmin, a Śaiva Brahmin from Madhyadeśa, i.e. Mid-India, who married princess Śobhājayā, daughter of King Jayavarman (I ? 657-680/ 681 A.D.).

(*b*) The inscription of Vat Prah Einkosei, which refers to the Brahmin Divākarabhaṭṭa, a native of the Mathura region of India. He married princess Indralakṣmī (A.D. 968).

(*c*) The Stele of Angkor Vat which speaks of Sarvajñamuni states that he was born in Āryadèśa, apparently meaning northern India.

(*d*) The Stele of Prah Bat similarly refers to the Brahmin Agastya who hailed from Āryadèsa.

For a detailed account of the role of Brahmins in the history and cultures of South-East Asia, reference may be made to my *Some Contributions of India to the Ancient Civilisation of Indonesia and Malaysia*, pp. 27-37.

[4] There is a huge literature on cultural contact, which cannot obviously be mentioned here, but a useful bibliography may be seen in Reginald le May, *The Culture of South-East Asia* (London) ; the early political contacts have been narrated by G. Coedès, *The Indianized States of South-East Asia*, pp. 46-7.

[5] Vide the sketch-map in P. Wheatley, *l.c.*, p. 34.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 27-30.

[7] For details vide W. P. Groeneveldt, *Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca*, p. 11.

[8] Vide A. Barth, *Inscriptions Sanscrites du Cambodge*, 28 ; R. C. Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Kambuja*, no. 13.

[9] *BEFEO* IV p. 918, no. III ; R. C. Majumdar, *Champā*, App. no. 12. The text refers to figures from both the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Consequently, the reference to the *aśvamedha*-sacrifice in verse 30 does not necessarily refer to the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

[10] *BEFEO*, XXVIII, pp. 147-48.

[11] R. C. Majumdar, *l.s.*, no. 78.

[12] Ed. S. Goldschmidt, with German translation, Strassburg and London, 1880, 1884 ; ed. Sivadatta and K. P. Parab, with Sanskrit commentary of Ramadasa, Bombay, 1895.

[13] Vide R. C. Majumdar, *l.c.*, no. 64, verse 81, 91 ; no. 65, verse 33.

[14] *Ibid.*, no. 93, verse 29.

[15] *Ibid.*, no. 97, verse 207.

[16] H. B. Sarkar, *Corpus of the Inscriptions of Java* (The first 59 inscriptions are in Vol. I, the rest in vol. II), no. III.

[17] The numerals within brackets refer to dates in the Christian era. The spellings are as given in the texts.

[18] H. B. Sarkar, *l.c.*, no. x.

[19] *Ibid.*, no. XXV.

[20] *Ibid.*, no. XL.

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] *Ibid.*, no. XLVI.

[23] *Ibid.*, no. LXX.

[24] *Ibid.*, no. LXXII.

[25] *Ibid.*, no. LXXX.

[26] *Ibid.*, no. XCVI.

[27] *Ibid.*

[27a] Vide Brandes-Krom, *Oudh. Jav. Oor.*, nos. XCIII & XCIV.

[28] See also C. Hooykaas, 'The Old-Javanese Rāmāyaṇa, an exemplary kakavin as to form and content' in *Verhand. Kon. Nederland. Akad. Wet. afd. lett.*, n.s. 65, no. 1, 5.

[29] Vide H. B. Sarkar, *Literary Heritage of South-East Asia*, pp. 218 ff. and literature cited therein.

[30] Such as one deciphered by J. G. de Casparis in *Prasati Indonesia* II.

[31] H. B. Sarkar, *Indian Influences on the Literature of Java and Bali*, p. 180 and M. M. Ghosh, in *Journal of the Greater India Society*, III, pp. 113-117.

[32] H. B. Sarkar, *l.c.*, pp. 220-21 ; P. J. Zoetmulder, *Kalangwan*, pp. 83-87.

[33] It runs into 180 cantos, written in Sanskrit metres, and handles the theme of Aja and Indumatī. For the summary of the story, vide H. B. Sarkar, *l.c.*, pp. 225-229.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 229-30.

[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 230-31. Arjuna of this story is Arjunasahasrabāhu.

[36] For the reliefs of the Lara Jonggrang temple, vide J. Kats, *Het Ramayana op Javaansche tempel-reliefs* ; W. F. Stutterheim, *Rama Legenden und Rama reliefs in Indonesien*, Plates-volume.

[37] According to Chinese evidence, Ho-ling stretched from sea to sea in the north-south direction and was, according to I-tsing, at five sailing days' distance from Śrīvijaya (Sumatra), while its eastern limit lay, according to Javanese inscriptions mentioning Kaliṅga, to the north-west of Kediri by the side of the Kali Keling. Vide Brandes-Krom, *Oud-Javaansche Oorkonden*, no. LXXXII.

[38] *Rama legenden und Rama reliefs in Indonesien*, 1924.

[39] *Indian Influences on the Literature of Java and Bali*, pp. 197-211.

[40] P. P. Roorda van Eysinga, *Geschiedenis van Sri Rama*, etc., Amsterdam, 1843 ; W. G. Shellabear, *Hikayat Sri Rama* (Journal of the straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, no. 71, 1915).

[41] *The Rama saga in Malaysia*, pp. 187-8.

[42] Dhanit Yubo, *Introduction to Khon* (Department of Fine Arts, Bangkok), pp. 105-7.

[43] It has been edited by S. Sahai and published in two parts by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 1973.

[44] Vide *BEFEO* V (1905), p. 168 ; V. Raghavan, *The Rāmāyaṇa in Greater India*, p. 43.

[45] Vide in this connexion H. H. Juynboll in *Bijdr. Kon. Inst.*, 54, pp. 501-565; H. B. Sarkar, *Indian Influences on the Literature of Java and Bali*, pp. 300-1.

[46] According to some scholars, the clowns of the Javanese stage, namely Semar and his two sons, represent these ancestral spirits, who were webbed into the themes of the wayang-plays.

[47] G. A. J. Hazeau, *Bijdrage tot de Kennis van het Javaansche tooneel* (1897), pp. 23-24, 39-57 ; H. B. Sarkar, *l.c.*, pp. 291-92.

[48] The designation *nang talung*, i.e., 'the leather of Patalung' seems to betray Malayan-Javanese origin. According to some, it has come down to us from the Ayutthaya period. Vide V. Thompson, *Thailand, The New Siam* (1967), p. 753.

[49] V. Thompson, *l.c.*, p. 752.

[50] In Burma, the religion was established, as a form of state religion, in the eleventh century, in Thailand in the thirteenth century, in Kambuja it was still spreading in the fourteenth century, while in Campā the position was similar to that obtaining in Kambuja.

As regards Islam, it was established in the Malayo-Indonesian world in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth century. A map regarding the propagation of Islam in this region may be seen in D.G.E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, p. 192.

[51] W. P. Groeneveldt, *l.c.*, p. 56. Only a small part was preserved in Java. Vide Th. Pigeaud, *Literature of Java* I, p. 24.

INDO-CHINESE GEOGRAPHY AS DESCRIBED IN THE *PHRA LAK PHRA LAM*: A LAOTIAN VERSION OF THE RAMAYANA

SACHCHIDANAND SAHAI

THE *Phra Lak Phra Lam* is a literary work of great originality. It is not a mere translation of a foreign work in the Laotian language. Around a small nucleus of Rama story, a Lao author appears to have elaborated his narrative in order to describe the milieu in which he lived.

The text provides an extreme example of an Indian theme being completely transformed to suit the conditions of the new country for which it was meant. It offers the possibility of studying the interaction of a South-east Asian civilization with that of India. The geographical setting of the story of the Phra Lak Phra Lam clearly indicates the process of interaction leading to the complete transformation of the original setting of the Ramayana story.

The locus of the first part of the story is an area extending from Inthapathanakhon (usually identified with Angkor) to Chanthaburi Si Sattanak (Vientiane). Many place-names along the two sides of the Mekong are associated with the journey of Phralam or other characters of the story.

In the second part the geographical horizon of the story expands with the transfer of Raphanasuan's capital from Inthapathanakhon to Lanka (Sri Lanka ?). Inthapathanakhon becomes a medial point between Vientiane and Lanka. From Inthapathanakhon Rama goes to Lanka to recover his wife Sita from Raphanasuan (Ravana). From there he returns to Inthapathanakhon and then sets forth to Vientiane.

In this study we propose to discuss various itineraries described in the *Phra Lak Phra Lam*, which furnish geographical details indicating the process by which the story has been localised in Laos.

I

Journey of Dasaratha from Inthapathanakhon to Chanthaburi Sisattanak :

Accompanied by his wife and his people, Dasaratha leaves the city of Inthapathanakhon through its northern gate, and after a long journey arrives at the bank of a river two yojanas wide. He crosses the river and then climbs a mountain. After travelling across a savana (khok) for two or three days, he reaches a river 200 *va* wide named Menam Mun. Then passing through Dong Bang I, Menam Songkham, Menam Heuai Hleuang, Menam Souei Kham he reaches the bank of the Mekong.

Dasaratha settles for some time at Phan Phao on the bank of the Mekong. But later at the intervention of the naga, the guardian deity of that place, he transfers his capital to the other side of the Mekong and names the city Chanthaburi Si Sattanak after the name of the seven hooded naga.

Taking Inthapathanakhon as identical with Angkor or any other city in Cambodia, it is obvious that the narrator of the story was not at all acquainted with the area between Inthapathanakhon and the valley of the Mun in north-eastern Thailand. In fact, he does not mention any place-name in this area. The place-names which he mentions are all situated in an area between the valley of the Mun and Vientiane on the right side of the Mekong.

II

Journey of Raphanasuan from Inthapathanakhon to Chanthaburi Si Sattanak and back

Rising in the sky Raphanasuan proceeds from Inthapathanakhon along the Mekong towards the north and reaches the city of Chanthaburi Si Sattanak. He abducts Nang Chantha, the daughter of Dasaratha, his uncle and returns to Inthapathanakhon.

Since the journey is undertaken through air, no place-names are mentioned between the two cities. However, it is clearly indicated that Chanthaburi Si Sattanak was situated to the north of Inthapathanakhon.

III

Journey of Raphanasuan across Jambudvipa in search of a rival

In course of this journey the cities of Takkasial, Lomavisaya and Himavana are mentioned. Identification of none of these cities is certain.

IV

Journey of Dasaratha's wife to an island in the vicinity of Çhanthaburi Si Sattanak

Dasaratha's wife gives birth to Phra Lak and Phra Lam on an island in the neighbourhood of Chanthaburi. The island is called Don Keut (=island of birth) to commemorate this event. Two other place-names mentioned in course of this journey are Tha Ba and Hat Say Don Chan.

V

Journey of Phra Lam over Jambudvipa, riding the horse Manikap and accompanied by Indra

The only place mentioned in course of this journey is Don Ba Khi.

VI

Journey of Phra Lak and Phra Lam from Çhanthaburi Si Sattanak to Inthapathanakhon to recover Nang Chantha from Ravana's palace

Crossing successively five rivers (Nam Ngum, Nam Sangiep, Nam Sading or Kading, Nam Satheun and Nam Sathon) Phra Lak and Phra Lam reach the mouth of the Hin Bun river. Then they travel upto the bank of Nam Se and from there they reach a small river, a natural silver mine not mentioned by name in the text. Past menam Lohini, from a cliff they behold a mountain peak marking the boundary of the kingdom of Kapilavatthu.

Looking to the left they see the Thananathi. Looking to the south they see the houses of thamil people or the people belonging to various branches of the Kha. In a Kha village they ask the way leading to Inthapathanakhon. Someone tells them : 'Following the east bank of Thananadi you will first reach the city of Kha Sam Sen and then a river one yojana wide called menam sale tom. Crossing this river, please continue to travel for three or four days until you reach the three big rivers. Going beyond the three rivers you will reach an unfathomable wide ocean. You will certainly see the Thananadi flowing into the ocean. Cross the river Thananadi and go to the west side where Inthapathanakhon stands'.

Following the above instructions they proceed from the Menam Lohini and arrive at Doy China where stands the village of Kha Phu Luang. Khun Phi Phak, the village chief says that Nang Chantha was alright in the city of Inthapathanakhon. The village Kha Phu Luang should be located in the vicinity of Inthapathanakhon, because in course of their long journey, Phra Lak and Phra Lam get information about their sister nang Chantha at this place. But the text says that after a fifteen days journey they reach the city of Kha Sam Sen which was closed up in the mountains and was situated near Anama in the domain of Kapilavatthu. Crossing successively two rivers, the one eight thousand *va* wide and another one hundred thousand *va* wide and then travelling for many days and nights they reach the deep and vast *menam samut*. To the west they see the That In Khwen and the city of Inthapathanakhon.

VII

Return Journey of Phra Lak and Phra Lam from Inthapathanakhon to Chanthaburi Si Sattanak after recovering Nang Chantha from Ravana's palace

After releasing Nang Chantha, Phra Lak and Phra Lam return following the west bank of Thananandi. They stop at Don Khong and fight Raphanasuan who was persuing them. Li Phi is described in the vicinity of this place. Then the three rivers—Nam Se Kong, Nam Se Bang Hiang and Nam SE Bahg Phai are mentioned. In the valley of these rivers one of the allies of Raphanasuan was defeated by Phra Lam. Phu Ba Long is described as their next stop. Then they successively cross the mouth of the Mun and Heua Hin. From Heua Hin they reach the mouth of the Bang Muk where Raphanasuan was defeated. Then they pass through a number of islands : Don Khi Khvaya, Don Ham Hlai, Don Kasek. On the last island are situated Hat Keng Nok and Veun Kum. They go along the east bank and travel through the Heuai Bang Bat and Don Khai Nok. Their next stop is at Hat Keng Ahong described as the gateway of Takkasila Nakhon Noi situated under water. Phra Lam visits the under water kingdom and marries the daughter of the lord Simphalika. At this stage the text mentions Don Krataya to the south of Phiang Pha Khan and the mouth of Nam Ngiap. Passing through Don Khon Lat Phiv Phang, Don San Hat Kev, Don Chava Kha and Hat Keng Ahong they reach Meuang Thavaya. Phra Lak and Phra Lam marry the daughters of Pommachak, the king of Meuang Thavaya. They travel through the mouth of Nam Ngum, Don Sangkhi, Don Keut, Hat Say Don Chan until they reach Vientiane.

VIII

Journey of Five Khun Sena and the Horse Manikap to present Dowry and bring the Maidens whom Phra Lak and Phra Lam had married :

The places mentioned in this itinerary are the same as in nos. 6 and 7. However, some additional information regarding the abandoned Meuang Thavaya and a new settlement carrying the same name is given in this itinerary. Pachanatha city is described as the dwelling of Kha Phu Phao Phu and Phu Nak.

IX

Journey of Phraya Chanthasena from Meuang Khun Khom to Vientiane and back

Chanthasena, the lord of Meung Khun Khom visits Vientiane to offer his daughters to Phra Lam. Before he begins his journey back to Meuang Khun Khom and in course of this journey, young men of Vientiane in love with the maidens of Khun Khom run away with their beloved ones. One such couple founds the city of Xieng Khwang.

Phraya Chanthasena stops at the river Hin Bun from where many such couples run away and found new settlements : Meuang Kham Keut, Ban Heup, Huai Khi Phi Then, Phu Thun Meuang Pong Ling.

Some other couples escape from the next halt at the bank of Nam Se. They found Si Khottabong, Meuang Veun. Past Menam Se one couple escapes and founds the city of Atapeu.

X

Journey of Khun Chong from Inthapathanakhon to Vientiane

This itinerary follows the pattern of the preceding one. It is mentioned that the young men of Inthapathanakhon fell in love with the maidens of Vientiane. The couples run away and found the following cities : Meuang Pasak, Meuang Kham Khun, Meuang Sangkha, Meuang Sulin Nang Long, Meuang Phothisat, Meuang Mattabong, Meuang Hoy Et Paktu, Meuang Sangkettanakhon or Meaung Sisaket, Phimpha Sada Khun Khom, Meuang Si Khottabun, Hnong Han, Menam Kam, /Ephassarasida Nakhon Lat, Hnong Han Noi, Pha Kev Phanna, Phu Hlangka, Menam Khong Long, Menam Jung, Menam Mao, Meuang Khia Kay Pa Lay, Phan Pha, Thai Hnong Bua Lumphu.

XI

After his victory over Lanka, Rama returns to Inthapathanakhon. Before regaining Vientiane he travels through the following cities in Thailand : That Khong Heua Ok, La Vai, Phisnulok, Nakhon Savan, Doy Nanthirat, Kung Si Ayuthiya, Menam Hullaman, Meuang Khon Rat, Meuang Phay Song. Meuang Phi May.

After describing the major itineraries mentioned in the Phra Lak Phra Lam, we propose to discuss the identification of Inthapathanakhon and Lanka.

Inthapathanakhon :

The city of Inthapathanakhon plays a key role in the Laotian story.

To explain the origin of the city it is stated that a Brahma couple descended from the heaven and tasted the burnt earth. They could not return to their heavenly abode as their bodies became very heavy by tasting the earth. So they founded a city on the " seashore " in the south. On many occasions it is stated that Inthapathanakhon was situated in the southerly direction in relation to Vientiane.

That Inthapathanakhon refers to the land of the Khmer people is obvious from a mythical explanation about the origins of the Khmer : Dissatisfied with his parents Raphanasuan leaves the city of Inthapathanakhon and goes to settle on the island of Lanka. No Lord was left in the city. Only the servants (kha) remained and they hated their masters (hmen nay). So the city was called Kha Hmen. It was called Meuang Prathaya because the people fled away (arathaya hay hni) as they were afraid that Raphanasuan might carry them away to Lanka.

However, none of the itineraries described in the text help us in determining precisely the location of Inthapathanakhon in Cambodia. The itinerary no. 1 describes the route from Inthapathanakhon to Vientiane, but the first place-name mentioned between the two cities is the Mun in the northeastern Thailand. The itinerary no. 6, which refers to places situated between Vientiane and Inthapathanakhon, is quite clear upto the Menam Se in southern Laos. The river Lohini near the kingdom of Kapilavatthu is mentioned after the Menam Se. The identification of Lohini is not certain, but the kingdom of Kapilavatthu may mean Vietnamese territory around Annama.

In an adjoining Kha village Phra Lak and Phra Lam are advised to pass through the city of Kha Sam Sen and then to cross a river named *sale tom.* After a journey of three or four days they were supposed to arrive at the three big rivers and then at an unfathomable wide ocean (nam samut).

While describing the actual journey the narrator says that from Doy Chin, the village of the Kha Phu Hleuang Phra Lak and Phra Lam travelled for fifteen days and arrived at Kha Sam Sen near Annama, the domain of Kapilavatthu. Then they crossed successively a river eight thousand *va* wide and another one hundred thousand *va* wide. After continuing their journey for a long time, they reached the *menam samut* and to the west they found the city of Inthapathanakhon.

There is an obvious discrepancy between the description of the route given by the Kha guide and the actual journey performed. According to the Kha guide Phra Lak and Phra Lam were supposed to cross the *sale tom* and then the three big rivers before reaching their destination. But in the course of actual journey performed after Kha Sam Sen, they crossed two rivers and then travelled for a long time before reaching *menam samut*. It may be supposed that the Sale Tom and the three big rivers have been omitted in the later description due to the carelessness of the narrator.

The three big rivers may be the meeting point of the Strung Treng in Cambodia. However, as Dhani Nivat has pointed out, the geographical description of Inthapathanakhon does not tally with the location of any Khmer capital of historical times, Angkor or Lovek. No historical city has been known to be located on the mouth of the Mekong. Agreeing with Dhani Nivat's interpretation of *samut* as any stretch of water it may be suggested that by *menam samut* is meant Tonle Sap. In fact once in a year, the Mekong flows in the great lake. In the light of the above facts, it may be tentatively suggested that the city of Inthapathanakhon is identical with Angkor.

Lanka (Don/Meuang)

The island of Lanka is mentioned in the second part of the story. Dissatisfied with his parents Raphanasuan abandons Inthapathanakhon and goes to build a new city on this southern island. He travels by boat. But the narrator indicates in a vague way the distance between Inthapathanakhon and Lanka by saying that it would take six months to reach the island if one goes on foot.

Dhani Nivat argues that ' since the story has been developed from scenes along the Mekong down to the Khmer Empire and across the seas to a deserted island in the south which is named

Lanka, that island must be nearer to the main island of Indochina in just the same way as the real story as told elsewhere develops its scene of action from the slopes of the Himalayas downwards past the Vindhyas and modern Mysore and then across the seas to Ceylon'. He proposes to identify Lanka with Lankasuka of the Malaya peninsula believing that the underworld kingdom of Pattahlum corresponds to the modern Thai province of Pattalung.

However, the possibility of Ceylon being identical with the island of Lanka cannot be altogether ruled out. The author of the Phra Lak Phra Lam seems to have used the old Laotian chronicles like the Nithan Khun Burom or the Pheun Phra Bang. The route between Lanka (Ceylone) and Laos via Inthapathanakhon is well known to the authors of the two chronicles. As Dhani has himself pointed out Lankasuk is not an island. The identification of Pattahlum with the Thai province of Pattalung provides a strong argument in favour of Lankasuk's correspondance with Lanka of Laotian text. But it could also be argued that the kindgom of Pattahlum is a purely mythical place-name and has been introduced to elaborate the episode of the kidnapping of Phra Lam by a king of the under world. Moreover, the author of the Phra Lak Phra Lam describes his part of world as " our Jambudvipa" and distinguishes it from Lanka.

From the foregoing analysis it is quite clear that the events of the Laotian Rama legend take place in an area extending from Vientiane to Inthapathanakhon and including north-eastern Thailand.

In the first part of the story, the author appears to be familiar with the geographical setting of the event. In fact he describes with great precision various places on the Mekong upto Champasak. His description of the area from Champasak to Inthapathanakhon is vague, suggesting that the Laotian author had no accurate idea of this part. As a result of this vague account, it is not possible to identify with precision the city of Inthapathanakhon in Cambodia.

The island of Lanka is the scene of the second part of the story. Journey from Inthapathanakhon to Lanka by boat does not offer any helpful geographical details, and the identification of Lanka remains uncertain.

SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF THE RAMAYANA IN LAOS

KAMALA RATNAM

> 'That word 'Ramayana' also recalls the immense debt due to India by all the lands of South-East Asia which today comprise Indonesia, the Malayan peninsula, Thailand and what used to be French Indo-China, during colonial times.'
>
> —Reginald, May

SOCIO-CULTURAL developments in any country are mostly due to its geographical position and historical past. Laos is a small land-locked country, about 620 miles in length, situated diagonally on the eastern banks of the mighty Mekong river. The Ganga, the Mekong and the Yang-tse-kiang all daughters of the Himalaya, rising from the Roof of the world, have been the mothers of great Asian civilizations. The Mekong flowing through a distance of 4,100 miles, is known as (me=ma, kong= Ganga) mother Ganga. Bounded on all four sides by China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Burma, Laos has been open to diverse cultural influences. Yet Indian culture and civilization found a ready haven in Laos. In the words of George Coedes, ' Having inherited Indian culture in its various aspects, Laos has defended it against Chinese culture.' Occupying the middle valley of the Mekong, with the river forming its western frontier, and backed by the Indo-Chinese cordilleras on the East. Laos is protected by heavy rapids in the north and south. Geographically it is a well-defined unit. Also it has a well-marked seasonal and physical personality. A net-work of small rivers flowing from the cordilleras fans out to meet the great river, thus providing easy transport to all parts of the country. The Laotians are an amiable, happy and hospitable people, always laughing and open hearted ready to give as well as receive best.

Beginnings of Indian Culture

Indian culture began to spread in Indo-china even before the beginning of the Christian era. Together with the Malayan peninsula and the Indonesian islands, these lands were known to Indians as Suvarnabhumi and Suvarnadvipa. Hindu culture religion and literature were brought here by Indian travellers, sea-farers and traders. There is a mixture of Hinduism and Buddhism in the countries of South-East Asia. Temples dedicated to the Buddha are found in abundance. In almost all cases the inner and outer walls of the temples are embellished with carvings and painting representing Hindu Gods and Goddesses in which the story of the Ramayana finds paramount place. In Champa (modern Viet Nam) a temple dedicated to Valmiki, poet-creator of the Ramayana, has been found dating from the seventh century. It is the only temple anywhere in Asia, commemorating Valmiki as the author of the Ramayana; it has a Sanskrit inscription to this effect. The Ramayana in Laos is very similar to its Thai and Cambodian counterparts, both of which are older and hence nearer to the original of Valmiki. However, each of these three countries has moulded the story to suit its own genius and national character. In Laos the Ramayana is present in five forms: (1) Dance and Drama (2) Song (3) Painting and Sculpture[1]. (4) Sacred texts to be recited on festive occasions and (5) Manuscripts. In addition there are oral traditions highly mixed up with local folklore, music and dance.

Manuscripts of the Ramayana

As regards the manuscripts of the Ramayana, Laos does not present a very encouraging picture. One has to keep in mind the fact that till recently there was no printed edition of the Lao Ramayana, until the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) sent an Indian Scholar to Vientiane to help in the search and publication of available manuscripts. As a result of this the Lao language text edited by Sachchidananda Sahai was published by the Indian Embassy in Vientiane in 1973. The editor was able to use six manuscripts as the basis of his work, one of which originally consisting of 43 sections was preserved in the museum of Vat Pra Keo in Vientiane. This manuscript was shown to me when I visited the museum in 1961. At that time Laotian Scholars had informed me that *Chao phet Sarath* a member of the Lao princely family, had commissioned the manuscript of the *Phra lak Phra lam* (Beloved Lakshmana Beloved Rama) (Lao title of the Ramayana) to be copied in the year 1933. The work was completed in 60 volumes, each volume consisting of 20 phuk (leaves) and the complete manuscript was carefully preserved in Vat Pra Keo. I was further informed that during the 1945 invasion of Laos by Japan, more than half of the Phet Sarath Manuscript was found missing. As Vientiane was in the grip of civil war in the years 1960-61, and travel conditions were very uncertain, it was quite impossible to make further enquiries or researches. In fact the authorities were even reluctant to permit a close examination of the existing manuscripts. The published text of the *Phra lak Phra lam* in two volumes is in the Lao language and script and so far no translation is available.

Local Non-Valmikian Versions

In the meanwhile another version of the Ramayana story known as the *Gvay Dvorahbi* was published by Sachchidananda Sahai in 1976. This is one of several minor *Non-Valmikian* Versions of the Ramayana prevalent in Laos. The Manuscripts of *Gvay Dvorabhi*, henceforward referred to as GD. was kept in the private collection of His Majesty and the late King *Savanga Vatthana* at Luang Prabang which was the royal capital of Laos before the present regime took over. King Savanga Vatthana was an avid student of ancient Indian literature and philosophy and was a great patron of arts and letters. Most of the cultural life extant today in Laos after the ravages of civil war and war, is due to the personal efforts and munificence of the late King.

The comparatively short manuscript of the GD is written in the Yuan Script and in a dialect which is spoken in the northern region of Laos and Xieng-Mai. The Manuscript consists of 67 leaves and the text is in a very corrupt state with frequent lacunae. Sahai has, however, given a useful English translation of the text, the basis of which is not the Manuscript in the collection of His Majesty the late King, but a Lao language copy made in 1971 by a scholar in the Royal Palace at Luang Prabang.

The *Gvay Dvorahbi* version of the Ramayana provides excellent background material for the study of local socio-cultural and anthropological influences brought to bear upon the core theme of the Ramayana as propounded by Valmiki. Extra Valmikian versions of the Ramayana have been present in India itself from very early times. Camille Bulcke in his monumental work 'Ramkatha' has studied more than 30 such versions. These extra-Valmikian versions travelled in South-East Asia with the Indian people of different origins and areas, who visited the region from time to time and settled there. Below are given some interesting facts about GD. The title refers to the episode of the buffalo *Dundubhi* in the Valmiki Ramayana. This episode seems to enjoy great popularity in the north of Laos and Thailand. The northern Lao and the Thai are very nearly the same people, with similar customs and manners, food and dress and speaking two variations of the same language. The Thai are very fond of fights. Commenting on the Thai version of the Ramayana, Dr. Raghavan writes, 'The whole version is overfull with fights ; fights are almost the highlights of the Rama-theatre of South-East Asia.' The Thai Ramayana, known as *Ramakirti* (pronounced *Ramakien*) is a very long composition with the multiplication of battle scenes and episodes featuring Hanuman. 'In fact these grow in the Thai version like Hanuman's tail as the Tamil saying goes.'[2] Every opportunity is taken to enlarge and highlight fights where Hanuman or Bali or Angada figure as heroes. This is how in course of the long drawn out centuries, Hanuman has gradually replaced Rama as the hero of the Ramayana in almost all the South-East Asian countries. The antics and prowess of this extraordinary monkey, apart from his other qualities of a loyal companion, counsellor and a trusted servant and warrior, provide the much needed amazement and endear him to the audiences of these regions, who, compared to their Indian counterparts, are more practical, fun loving and carefree and prone to enjoy themselves in their everyday life and behaviour. In the South-East Asian versions the hero of the Ramayana is unmistakably Hanuman, the white Monkey, and his white and gold appearance on the stage is indeed very very impressive.[3]

It is no wonder therefore, that the northern Lao have been attracted by the episode of Bali's fight with the buffalo Dundubhi, and have used it as the title of their Ramayana story, although it occupies a very small part of the narrative. As a matter of fact there is a legend in Luang Prabang according to which the bones of the buffalo Dvorahbi are supposed to be lying in the vicinity of Meu' an Kasi in northern Laos. The mountain *Khao Khuai* (Horn of the Buffalo) near Vientiane, is also believed to be named after Dvorabhi.[4] A similar case of localization is seen in Indonesia where it is believed that the volcanic mountain in Central Java is formed with the dead carcass of Ravana after he was killed by Rama. And that Ravana is not completely dead yet and whenever he turns, the earth shakes and there is an earthquake. The story of the buffalo Dundubhi appealed to the Laotian mind because in their everyday life they are more familiar with the buffalo than any other animal of Indian origin. The water-buffalo is the main instrument of agriculture in Laos. The growing of a special kind of sticky rice is the most important and basic crop in Laos, and the water buffalo is best suited for work in the wet rice paddies.

The locale of both 'Phra Lak Phra Lam' and the GD is the land of Laos. The 'Phra Lak Phra Lam' was written by a certain *Phutthaphochan* (*Buddhaghoshacharya*) in the first half of the 19th century. It portrays Rama as a mighty king of Vientiane, exercising control over neighbouring territories. Rama is shown as achieving political gains through matrimonial alliances. Laos has a long history of being over-run by Thai armies. As a reaction to this, after their victory over Lanka, Rama and Lakshmana march back to Vientiane through Thai territory. On their way they establish many new cities including *Ayuthya*, *Pisanulok* and *Nokhon Savan* all of which exist in Thailand today. Rama's kingdom extends from Vientiane to *Intha Nakhon* (*Indraprastha Nagar*) the capital of *Khmer* region. The sons of Rama and Lakshmana are shown ruling over large parts of north-eastern Thailand. In fact even today these places situated on the Northern banks of the Mekong are claimed as Laotian territory. Thus the socio-political conditions prevailing in Laos between 1711-1828 A.D. are fully reflected in 'Phra Lak Phra Lam' whose author, probably a monk, was a court poet of Vientiane. Wishing to give wide popularity and permanence to his panegyric he wove his legend around the well-known story of the Ramayana. The characters of 'Phra Lak Phra Lam' are extremely fresh and novel and except for the bare bones of the plot, they bear little resemblance to their originals in Valmiki. They move and behave exactly like Lao men and women and conforms strictly to local customs and traditions. The social life, food and dress and other norms of general behaviour follow closely the Laotian pattern.

In the case of the 'Gvay Dvorahbi' the process of localization and assimilation has gone much farther. The whole story is built around three princes who are descended from the same royal line. This is strongly reminiscent of events between 1711 and 1731 A.D. when Laos had split into three parts and a separate prince was ruling in each part.[5] Rabahnasan (*Rovanesvara*), Rama[6] and *Bari* (Bali) are the three princes ruling over the kingdom of Lanka, Kururathahnahgan (*Kururashtranagara*) and Kasi. This Kasi is supposed to be the same as *Meu an Kasi* in north Laos where the bones of the buffalo Dvorahbi are interred. Lanka seems to be the present state of Sri Lanka with which the Buddhist scholars in Laos were quite familiar.[7] Kururathahnahgan is stated to be situated in Jambudvipa, a name commonly used for India in olden times. Rama is described as the king of Kururathahnahgan ruling over one hundred and one other kings of Jambudvipa.[8] It is curious that out of these three kingdoms, the writer has preferred the one ruled over by Bali to be situated in Laos, probably because of his involvement with the Dundubhi episode. However, he has played havoc with the geneology of the three princes. 'In the first *Kalpa* a maha Brahma named *Tappaharahmensvn* ruled the kingdom of Kasi. He had three sons born of different mothers on the same day and same hour. *Dattahratthah Dasaratha Vilunlahhah Virunahak* of 'Phra Lak Phra Lam') and *Viruppakkah* (*Virupaksha*).' Dasaratha has two sons *Bari* (*Bali*), and *Sugip* (*Sugriva*) and a daughter *Nan Rasirajdita*, who is married to her eldest brother Bali according to Lao custom which permits a man to marry his younger cousin. *Vilunlahhah* has three sons Ravana, Vibhishana and Indrajit.[9] As opposed to this the geneology given in the 'Phra Lak Phra Lam' is more accurate and nearer to the original in Valmiki. A long process of transformation, adaptation, pressure of local custom and unfamiliarity with any written version coupled with the author's fancy is responsible for this mix up. We see that the geneology is totally reversed here, a plausible reason for which may be the author's desire to elevate the status of his principal characters Bali and Sugriva by making them the sons of Dasaratha. For it is Bali and Sugriva who are involved in the fight with Dundubhi.

Lao Meaning of the Word 'Si-ta'

Another example of the acculturation of the story is the author's attempt to find Laotian meaning in the Indian names of the characters of the GD. Ravana assumes the form of Indra and seduces Nan Sujata, Indira's principal queen. In order to avenge herself. Sujata reincarnates herself on the lap of Ravana as his daughter. On the advice of astrologers that the new born girl is a danger to him, Ravana puts the infant girl in a golden casket and sets her afloat.[10] When she arrives on the shores of Jambudvipa a sage named Kassapa adopts her. 'He calls her Sita because when he opened the casket he found the little girl inside raising her hand and rubbing (si) her eyes (ta). Equally bizarre is the story of Bali's son Ongot (Angada). Both Rama and Lakshmana are wandering in the forest in search of Sita. Lakshmana brings water from a river to quench the thirst of his elder brother. This water tastes salty. Together the two brothers travel upstream to find the source of the salty river, until they come upon Sugriva who is sitting and weeping because his elder brother Bali has thrown him out of the kingdom, which was being ruled jointly by the two brothers and their sister Kasirajdita. Sugriva then relates the stroy of *Dvorahbi* to Rama. A herd of buffaloes, with Dvorahbi at their head, has overrun the Kingdom of Kasi. They have gored people and destroyed fruit and field, so much so that 'the inhabitants of Kasi died of starvation because they could not work in their fields.' The officials complained about the buffaloes to their lords Bali and Sugriva.

Bali offered a thousand gold pieces to anyone who would drive away the buffaloes. None was found who could do this work. Then Nan Kasirajdita spoke to her two brothers asking them to go and chase the buffaloes. Both Bali and Sugriva did not utter a word.[11] Much displeased, Nan Kasirajdita said, 'If there is no one able to fight, I who am a woman, shall go to fight.' Nan

Kasirajdita is in an advanced stage of pregnancy, still she fights the buffaloes. During the fight the buffaloes gore her badly, piercing her two eyes. Her skirt is torn to pieces and scattered all over. Thinking that she is dead, the buffaloes run away. When the people came to lift her body they find that a child has come out of her womb with his body curved at many places. So the people call him Ongot (curved body)'[12]. This was Angada, Later another child was discovered and he was named Valahyot.

The episode of the people picking up Kasirajdita's torn skirt and making a new skirt, after adding some new pieces to it was later connected with the Laotian art of making beautiful skirts with several pieces. Again, while fighting with the buffaloes Nan Kasirajdita fell on a buffalo's horns and bent them backwards. Since then all the buffaloes have their horns curved and bent backward.[13]

The 'Gvay Dvorahbi' provides similar motifs regarding the hair, jaw and other traits of monkeys. It also mentions how the bat did not help in the construction of the raft over the ocean, when all the animals and birds were bidden to do so. He claimed that since he was neither bird nor beast, he could not be included in either category. 'When Rama knows this, he orders, 'Do not let him perch anywhere on my earth. Since then the bats have been perching on trees, on cliffs and in caves.' Similar tales about the bat are prevalent amongst the folk-culture of many countries. These are only instances how the Lao people have tried to assimilate the story to their everyday lives and experience and have brought it within the compass of the common man's knowledge and taste.

Fight with Dundubhi

After the birth of Ongot and Varahyot, both Bari and Sugip go to fight the buffaloes. They kill many of them ; those who remained ran inside a cave. Sugriva relates 'Before entering the cave Bari, my elder brother said to me, 'If you see thick blood coming out, it will be buffalo's blood. In this case you should wait for me. If you see clear and thin blood, it will be my blood. Then you should go back and rule the kingdom of Kasi.' As clear and thin blood streamed out, I thought my brother dead and I returned to rule the kingdom of Kasi.'[14] From the foregoing it appears that Bali fought a herd of buffaloes called Dvorabhi and not a single one. In other less corrupt versions like the' Phra Lak Phra Lam' and the Ramakien Bali fights the leader of the herd. In the ' Phra Lak Phra Lam ' the names of the two brother have been reversed and it is Sugriva's wife Nan Kottahrat who goes to fight the buffalo of her own accord. She is later blinded by her husband's younger brother, in this case Bali. Thus the story of the fight with Dundubhi is more or less parallel in both the Laotian versions. Both Thai and Lao Versions mention rain falling at the time of Bali's fight with Dundubhi and making the blood lighter, thereby causing Sugriva to mistake it for his brother's blood. The addition of the rain to the episode makes it more acceptable to ordinary common sense. The origin of this incident is found in the Bengali Ramayana from where it must have travelled to these parts. The incident does not occur in Valmiki. The Indonesian Ramayana also mentions the rain as having made the colour of the blood lighter.

Birth of Hanuman

Another bizarre story attributable to the fertile Lao immagination in the ' Gvay Dvorahbi ' is the birth of Hanuman. Nan Gandapbi (*Gandharvi*) dances before King Dattahratthah as a result of which his semen flows out. Nan Gandapbi collects the semen and puts it in the mouth of Nan Kasirajaita, the blind mother of Ongot and Varahyot, who was lying under a fig tree. As a result of this Nan Kasi bears a son called *Hvarahman* (Hanuman). This version of the birth of Hanuman is different from all others. In the ' Phra Lak Phra Lam ' Rama climbs the Manikoth (*Manigrodha*) tree, by eating its fruit he is turned into a monkey. As a monkey, Rama takes for his wife, Phong Si, the daughter of To tama (Gotama) Rishi who had been cursed by her mother to become a monkey. As a result of the union Hanuman is born. In this story too one can find the echoes of the Indian tradition which describes Hanuman as the son of Rama.[15]

Birth of Sita as Ravana's Daughter

The ' Gvay Dvorabhi ' records some important variations in the main events of the story. The fact of Sita being born as Ravana's daughter is not entirely due to extra-Indian sources. The Uttarapurana and the Vasudevahindi and the Kashmir tradition mention Sita as the daughter of Ravana but do not refer to her being cast adrift. Instead she is buried underground from where she is later discovered by Janaka.[16] The Valmiki Ramayana contains a hint in the Uttarakanda which might have been the nucleus of such a belief. In the Kritayuga Vedavati, the daughter of Rishi Kusadhvaja was promised to Vishnu. Once as she was practising Tapas in the Himalayas, she was seen and molested by Ravana. She then, considering herself to be polluted, threw herself into the fire. But before doing so, she vowed to be reborn in order to kill Ravana.

Esha Vedavati Nama Purvamasit Krite Yuge
Tretayugamanuprapya Vadhartham Tasya Rakshasah.
Utpanna Maithilakule Janakasya Mahatmanah
Sitotpanna tu Siteti Manushaih Punaruchyate.

—**Valmiki Ramayana** VII—17-38, 39

In the Tretayuga, this same Vedavati was born from the furrow as Sita, Janaka's daughter, so that she may kill Ravana, the demon.

Rama and Lakshmana go to study at Takshasila

Both Rama and Lakshmana as the sons of Virupakkaha, king of Kuru Ratthahnahgan go to Takkahsela (*Takshasila*) for study where they learn the three Vedas in two years.

Their teacher is referred to as *Disapamokkhacariya* in accordance with Buddhist practice. The 101 kings who come to lift the bow at Janaka's hermitage, hoping to marry Sita camp there for a number of years, until Rama and Lakshmana come there from Takshasila and Rama is able to lift the bow. The inclusion of this incident points to the fact that during the period when the Ramayana existed in an oral state only, how it got mixed up with Buddhist lore and history. Takshasila had been fixed in peoble's mind as an important place for learning, hence Rama and Lakshmana are sent there to acquire knowledge.

Rama and Sita fall in Love

Ramayana stories from the 8th century onwards describe Rama and Sita falling in love before the actual ceremony of marriage. Both Kamban (12th century) and Tulsidas (16th century) have waxed eloquent about it. In the GD Sita sees Rama arriving from the window of her palace. She is overpowered by passion, and losing consciousness collapses inside the palace. Says the GD 'her heart became as if it had melted away from the surface of her skin, penentrating her sinews, large and small, biting into the bones of her skull, as if it had melted all through her body. Her body shook as if she was a *Sorceress possessed by a spirit. Thus due to past and future misdeeds*, her heart trembled, and losing consciousness, she fell down inside the palace.' This passage clearly shows how local beliefs in ghosts and spirits, known as '*Phi*' in Laos, and the half digested theories about Karma, birth and rebirth of the Buddhist teachings, have criss-crossed and intermingled to give this weird description of such a basic and universally experienced and pleasant phenomenon like falling in love.[17] The 'Phra Lak Phra Lam' does not describe this incident.

Indra helps in the abduction of Sita

After the marriage when Rama, Lakshmana and Sita were comfortably settled in their kingdom, Indra thought in his divine mind that the desire of his wife Sujata who was now born as Sita in the world of mortals, in order to avenge herself upon Ravana, should no longer be delayed. So he (Indra) turned himself into a golden deer and limping with head bent, as if he had no life, he passed in front of the trio. As destined, at the request of Sita, Rama went after the deer. After some time Lakshmana also followed Rama leaving Sita in the care of Mother Earth. Ravana having known with his supernatural power that Sita was left alone came twice to carry her away, but failed as the Earth did not release her.[18] In the meanwhile being informed by Lakshmana that he had left Sita in the care of the Earth, Rama doubted the capacity of Mother Earth to protect her by saying 'How the Earth will be her shelter? 'Thus doubted Mother Earth released Sita and Ravana coming down for the third time was able to carry her away. This role of the Earth is also referred to in the 'Phra Lak Phra Lam'.

Hanuman tries to eat the Sun

Nan Kasi, Hanuman's mother died seven days after his birth. Before dying she advised her son to eat ripe figs to survive. Remembering this one morning thinking the rising Sun to be a ripe fig, Hanuman leapt towards it and got completely singed. Only some bubbles of his blood remained stuck to the Sun's chariot. Later the Sun God restored Hanuman to life by applying a liquid *Nam Cai Gai* which further increased his spiritual powers. This story occures in the Valmiki Ramayana but is absent in the ' Phra Lak Phra Lam '. The Laotians have adopted it to suit their own experience and magical practices.

Hanuman goes in search of Sita

The paintings in Vat Oup Muong follow more closely the 'Phra Lak Phra Lam ' version of the story. They give a more realistic idea of the Lao sense of humour and the Lao mind showing clearly how the Lao people visualize the antics of Hanuman when he goes on his first major mission of finding out the whereabouts of Sita. These antics are purely the result of the Lao imagination and thinking. They show the people's great love for fun and humour. The story of the paintings of Hanuman's search for Sita is as follows. Phong Si, Hanuman's mother (in the Phra Lak Phra Lam) has told him that Phra Lam (Rama) had become his father during the short while that he had lived as a monkey. Now Phra Lam called Hanuman and told him that he should go and search for Sita who is his first legal wife.[19] Hanuman then offers to go and find Nāng Sida, but he is very strong and powerful. Hence he wants a base from which he could take a leap in the air. If he does it from earth, then it will sink with his force ; if he does it from a tree, then the tree will break. So the father Phra Lam says, ' well you can jump from my knee! ' The painting shows Phra Lam sitting on the ground and Hanuman getting ready to take off from his knee. Extra large lizards, which are found in Laos, are shown climbing the trees. Once in the air, Hanuman proves too strong and he over-flies the city of Lanka reaching the Assom (*Asrama*) of a Rishi, whose name is Narada. This Rishi does not open his eyes, because if he opens his eyes then everything he sees will be burnt up. The Rishi then applied his magic water ' Nam Cai Gai ' to the ashes so that he may know what was burnt. Thus

Hanuman comes to life and the Rishi tells him that he has come too far, and he has to go back. As it was already very late, Hanuman asked the Rishi to let him stay there for the night. When darkness fell, he asked for a blanket and the Rishi gave him a handkerchief. Hanuman asked, 'why this handkerchief? I am big, I need a big blanket!' So he began stretching his body which became bigger and bigger and the handkerchief began to spread with him. This incident of the handkerchief provides sufficient amusement to the simple hearted Lao people. The same incident occurs in the Thai Ramayana also where the sage Narada shows his *Viswarupa* to Hanuman. This is due to the hard, headed common sense of the Thai Lao people which believs that even the greatest can meet his superior.[20] When Hanuman leaves the Rishi in the end, he is in a very much chastened mood. The story continues.

When the Rishi saw how powerful Hanuman was, he feared that he might pass over Lanka once again. So he wanted to reduce his strength by making him a little tired. The Rishi then threw his cane-stick into his toilet-water. Next morning when Hanuman was washing his face, the cane took the form of a leech and stuck against his forehead. So each time Hanuman tried to fly away the leech held him back to the basin just like an elastic band. The painting shows the basin and Hanuman howering on top attached to it by the stretching leech. The artist puts in plenty of Laotian local colour by including a Lao-style well with a hooked rope for drawing water. Another part of the mural shows the Rishi flying on top of trees getting fruits—apparently for Hanuman's breakfast! This painting in particular is full of Laotian sense of humour, their love for the extraordinary and bizarre coupled with their sound common sense and logic.

Humour in Valmiki Ramayana

Compared to the above, so far I have been able to find only one example of innocent and healthy humour in the Ramayana of Valmiki, which in all other respects is a highly adulatory, poetic and philosophical work. In the very beginning of the Balakanda Kusa and Lava, the two sons of Sita have been taught the Ramayana, 'which is sweet in word and melody and equipped with the three elements of musical concordance (*Sangita*, *Vādya* and *Nritya*). It is set to the seven notes of music, accompanied by stringed instruments and full of the various poetic flavours.'[21] The two boys go and sing this 'Righteous poem, excellent—*Dharmakhyanamuttamam*—in the assembly of sages and virtuous learned people. Once they happened to sing it in a particular assembly of Rishis, who after hearing it were so overcome with emotion that apart from praising the youthful singers. 'One got up and gave them his water jar,another overjoyed gave them his own bark garment, another took his deer skin seat from under him and presented it to them. Others hastened to remove their grass-girdles, water-vessels, sacred thread, grass-mat, rosary and yet another untied the small piece of cloth worn over his privities (*Kaupina*) in order to give it to the young boys, Valmiki takes care to mention nearly all the articles of use, strips of cloth, vessels, wood, strings which the forest-dwelling hermits possessed and everything is given away to the two singers.[22] This seems to be the extent of Indian humour in Valmiki, which is not surprising, because we in India are not noted as a carefree, fun-loving people. We are a thinking, worrying and speculative type more concerned with the origin and future of things.

Exile of Sita

The 'Gvay Dvorahbi' continues with the Rama story with characters and incidents retained in local memory, adding to them whatever suits their fancy from local folk-lore and stories brought to them by fresh waves of Indian visitors. The South-East Asian mind was unable to accept the banishment of Sita without assigning any tangible proof of her guilt. Both the GD and the 'Phra Lak Phra Lam' and the 'Ramakien' state that Sita draws the portrait of Ravana on the request of palace maidens. As Rama returns from his tour of the capital, the portrait is concealed under the Royal Throne. When Rama is seated, the portrait speaks, 'Both of us belong to the Royal lineage. Why do you sit on my head?' Rama had the seat removed and discovered the portrait. Having learnt that Sita herself had drawn the portrait, Rama was very angry with her. He even suspected her fidelity and immediately ordered his executioners to take Sita away and kill her.[23] Lakshmana offers to do this deed, but at the actual moment of killing he relents, 'because of the might and merit of the child in her womb, who had practised meditation during many past lives.' He sets Sita free in a jungle and draws his sword through the dead body of a newly died dog in order to show the blood-stained weapon to King Rama. According to the Laotian version, it was Indra himself who had intervened to save Sita by assuming the form of the dead dog. The Jain and the Bengali versions of the Ramayana mention the same story of Sita's exile. The little known but highly lyrical Ramayana of the Bengali poetess Chandravati refers to a daughter of Kaikeyi, by name *Kakua* who asks Sita to draw the picture of Ravana. In the Thai Ramayana a daughter of Surpanakha, wishing to avenge her mother, takes the form of a maid and induces Sita to draw the picture. In the Indonesian version Kaikeyi herself draws the picture of Ravana on a fan and leaves it on Sita's bed for Rama to find it. There are other variations of the story all of which point to the fact that the inherent sense of justice and fairplay of these simple-hearted people, and who so closely observed the just laws of nature did not easily accept the fact of Sita's exile. Nature itself was there to teach them lessons in morality and tell them what was wrong and what was right. The rest of the story, the birth of the two sons of Sita, their fight with Hanuman and Rama, Rama's defeat at their hands, Sita's entry inside the Earth and the final exit of Rama and Lakshmana from earth, is described more or less according to Valmiki with the addition of a great deal of folk-lore and local history, customs and social norms.

Change in the Character of Ravana

In Laos and other countries of South-East Asia there is a marked change in the character and personality of Ravana. His ten heads and twenty arms have been done away with and he is depicted as a clever and well-read young man of great beauty and charm, enjoying the protection of Indra. Sita also does not appear to be totally averse to his charms. As a matter of fact change in the character of Ravana began in India itself. There is an oral version of the Ramayana in the folk-tradition of Bengal known as the 'Ramlila Jhumur'. It says 'By crossing the sea Ravana carried Sita to Lanka, and offered worship to her as his mother'. The very idea of Ravana making love to Sita was abhorrent to the people who considered Rama as Vishnu and Sita as Lakshmi. For them Ravana abducted Sita only to pacify Surpanakha and keep his word given to her. In the *Jhumur* tradition Ravana is not a demon, but a grand and dignified man. There are instances when the *Jhumur* states that 'Rama used to see Ravana sitting in the lap of Goddess Kali '.[24]

The Story of Dundubhi transformed

Both the 'Gvay Dvorahbi' and the 'Phra Lak Phra Lam' refer to the original story of *Dundhubi.* In the Phra Lak Phra Lam he is an erring attendant of Indra who cursed him to be born on earth as the buffalo *Thorapha.* He was also told that any male child he produces will kill him. Hence he killed all his male children. When his wife came to know that he was doing this, she gave birth to her next offspring inside a hidden cave. In this way *Thoraphi,* the black buffalo was born and saved. When *Thoraphi* was full grown he came to fight with his father and killed him. After this Thoraphi ran amuck and reached the palace of Indra. Indra sent him back to earth saying you can try your strength with Bali. Thoraphi then entered *Khitkin* (*Kishkindha*) and fought Bali, who challenged him to a closed combat inside a cave. The wall painting in Vat Oup Muong in Vientiane gives a graphic picture of the whole scene .... Thoraphi became very powerful and he ruled all the buffaloes. One day he went to the rice fields belonging to the neighbouring city of Kukkutavadi and ate up all the rice and destroyed the fields. This he did very often. When the people of the city saw this, they went to the chief of the city and reported the matter to the two brothers (Bali and Sugriva). Learning this the brothers decided to kill the animal. . .' It is to be noted that the name of the city ruled by Bali and Sugriva is changed in all three versions. (1) Phra Lak Phra Lam—(Luang Prabang Version) *Khitkin* which is nearer to Kishkindha of Valmiki.[25] (2) Phra Lak Phra Lam— (Vientiane Version) *Kukkutavadi* (Kukkutavati, a city abounding in chickens and hens), here already local Laotian element are seen to be creeping in. (3) GD 'Kasi'—here the town has shifted to Lao territory proper.

Valmiki's Reference to Dundubhi

The story of the enmity between Bali and Sugriva is given by Valmiki in *three* separate sequences.[26] Chapter 9 gives Sugriva's version of the fight as related to Rama. Here Bali fights *Māyāvi,* who is Dundubhi's son. Chapter 10 gives Bali's side of the story as told to Sugriva, who in turn tells it to Rama, mentioning that Bali threw him (Sugriva) out of the Kingdom of Kishkindha appropriating his wife to himself. In chapter 11 Sugriva tries to convince Rama of the invincibility of Bali by relating to him Bali's second fight, this time with Dundubhi himself who in all probability came to avenge the death of his son Mayavi at the hands of Bali. From the Valmiki Ramayana it is clear that Bali fought twice, once with Māyāvi and again with Dundubhi his father. Thus there is no confusion in Valmiki's story as has been supposed by some scholars.

Conclusion

Laos received the Ramayana in many waves through upper Burma, northern Thailand and Cambodia upto the 13th century A.D. and even later. But a fresh impetus was given to its popularity in the 18th century when beautiful poems and epics based on it were written in the local languages of these countries. The kings of Thailand took the title of '*Rama*' for themselves and took active part in the writing of these poems. They dramatized the story and played it on the stage with gorgeous mass, costumes and music in the form of classical dance-drama. In all the three countries which cherished Indian culture, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, the Ramayana became the theme of the Royal court dances receiving great royal patronage and support.[27] It was performed on all important occasions, festivals and religious events. Members of the Royal family took part in the dances. Thus as a performing art, the Ramayana reached an ever larger number of people and creative artists who did not fail to weave their own emotions and experiences into it. Court traditions, protocol of religious and state ceremonies, moral and ethical teachings, changing customs and above all the local philosophy of life was incorporated in the text to prevent these from being lost for lack of record.

If civilization is the reaching out of the mind and heart of man to understand and love one another better and care for the others' needs more than one's own, then the Ramayana occupies pride of place in this effort. *It has exercised a great and perhaps the only civilizing influence* on the simple hearted tribal people of these regions. Laos specially is a country of serene, quiet and spiritually oriented people. They are a rustic lot, with few cities. Each village is a refuge of Buddhist and Hindu wisdom with its own temple, hospital and school attached to it. No one begs in Laos for the temple and the Sangha look after each individual. Being Buddhists they have learnt the lessons of Ahimsa so well that in 1960-61 when civil war broke out, the American-backed Laotian armies fired above the heads of the enemy who were their own brethren, thereby earning the contempt and ridicule of the American Commanders. The American militarists termed them, 'ignorant morons who thought that the world did not extend beyond Laos!' R. C. Majumdar was taken considerable pains to establish that the Thais and the Laos received Indian culture from the 2nd century B.C. onwards even when they were settled in the lower Yunnan Valley of China which was known by its Indian name of '*Gandhara*'.[28] Majumdar goes on to say, 'Indian culture and civilization were so readily accepted by these primitive peoples as they were living in a moral and cultural vacuum', a fact easily corroborated by the innovations and mutations introduced by them in the Ramayana story. Thus the characters of the Lao Ramayana do not show much regard for marriage vows and purity of relationships. Their own pattern of behaviour justifies their *ad-hoc* or chance relationships and actions. Even important characters like Rama and Hanuman invariably cohabit and have children from women they happen to meet. Hanuman and Angada are children of such relationships. The 'Ramakien' relates, that Bali had imprisoned Mando, Ravana's wife in his harem for sometime and Angada was born as a result of his union with her. In the 'Phra Lak Phra Lam' Ravana after his defeat, offers a boat to his enemy Rama, thereby showing that enmity is not permanent. Compared to men, in Laos women are expected to observe greater constancy in their marital ties. Consequently important women characters in the Lao Ramayana are virtuous and jealously protect their honour. This is seen in the case of Indra's wife Sujata who is born as Sita.

The characters of the Lao Ramayana move and behave exactly like Lao men and women. They conform strictly to local customs and traditions. Their social life, food and dress follow the Lao pattern. Close association with the animal and super-natural world is maintained as is evident even today in these regions.

Long passages of local love-poetry, reminiscent of the Sanskrit Mahākāvya are introduced as part of the narrative. In places lengthy discourses on Buddhist doctrine are included. Rama, as Bodhisattva, is seen preaching the law even to elephants and oxen. In course of time, in the absence of other records, the Lao Ramayana became a true encyclopaedia of Laotian life and customs, habits and beliefs, flora and fauna, geography and the history of its men and animals. The Phra Lak Phra Lam is a veritable dictionary of the actual topography of middle Laos. The first 20 Phuk (pages) of the manuscripts are devoted to the folkloric geography of the region where later on the characters grow and develop. The Laotian people believe that the Buddha himself recited the Phra Lak Phra Lam to the monks of the Settavana pagoda.

In yet another version of the Ramayana known in Laos as the *Phommachak* (Brahmachakra)[29], the story is treated as the previous life of Buddha himself. Rama is no other than Lord Buddha himself, Ravana is Devadatta and Sita is Yasodhara. Compared to the 'Phra Lak Phra Lam' this version could not gain popularity because having transformed the story the monks failed to provide a parallel iconography art and theatre for it. And in the absence of a visual cultural base, the transformed story failed to grip the imagination of the people.

Today the monarchy in Laos has ended, in its place there is a left wing oriented Presidential government. As late as in 1979, the Culture Ministry of Laos presented the Ramayana ballet before foreign and Indian visitors, saying ' we still draw inspiration from this epic. Rama is the symbol of the proletariat while Ravana speaks for the capitalist—colonialist powers. Rama and Hanuman are the creators of the gorilla warfare, a strategy by which we have regained our independence. '

Further Evidence from Majumdar

Apart from the ports of Tamralipti (modern Tamluk) on the Ganga, Palura near Gopalpur in Orissa and Masulipatnam in Andhra Pradesh, there was a regular trade route between Bengal and China through upper Burma and Assam. Through this route there was large scale trade and Indian migration outside. Says Majumdar, 'There is a persistent local tradition in favour of early migration of Indians across this route. Persons of an Indian cast of features are common on the West Coast near Takua Pa (in Malaysia), while colonies of Indian descent still survive on the coast of the Bay of Bandon, who trace the arrival of their ancestors from India by an overland route across the Malay Peninsula. The people whom they met at the different regions must have belonged to diverse races but it appears from all available evidence *that they were primitive* or pre-historic tribes still in a very low scale of civilization. Most probably they were still in the neo-lithic period. Their immediate transition from neo-lithic to Hindu period is attested by archeological finds in places like Cambodia *Annam* and the Malay peninsula and the Indonesian islands. Chinese chronicles, Burmese and Cambodian sources explicitly refer to Indian rulers who went and settled there. In this connection the story of '*Kaundinya*' founding the Indian Empire in *Kambuja* (modern Cambodia, now Kampuchea) in the 1st century A.D. is well known. Majumdar emphasizes that 'the deep and abiding influence of Indian culture and civilization and its continued presence in these areas can only be explained by the settlement of Indian colonies in these regions.' Majumdar quotes an eye witness account of Tuen Suin (a vessal state of Cochin-China) in the 5th century A.D. which says that 'there were 600 merchant families, 200 Buddhist and 1,000 Brahman families of India. The people of Tueo-Suin follow their religion and give them their daughters in marriage, as most of the Brahmans settle in the country and do not go away. Day and night they read sacred scriptures and make offerings of white vases, perfumes and flowers to the gods.'[30]

The powerful theme of the Ramayana exercises a deep and fascinating influence on the tribal people. The tribals have no literature of their own but they have a deep hunger for beauty and emotion and the Ramayana grips them. This is seen in all the principal tribal societies of India, in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan, all of which have their own versions of the Ramayana.[31] In one of the tribal versions from Rajasthan, Sita's exile is attributed to her misunderstandings with her mother-in-law Kausalya.

As a result of the International Ramayana Seminar held by the Sahitya Akademi in 1975 in which 60 nations presented their views on this great civilizing epic, it was also felt that the immense popularity of the Rama theme is not only due to the spiritual struggle of man—the eternal struggle between good and evil but also its eternal affirmation of life, the knowledge of a life which negates the concept of death as final. It is with this powerful theme that the Lao Ramayana opens in all its versions. This faith in man's immortality, the regaining of life through successive births, was further strengthened by the life and teachings of the Buddha. In the grand panorama of this epic the Asian mind sees the continuity of life, as an ever rejuvenating process, a principle kept eternally alive. Animals and people and birds too are killed in the story but they do not die. There is no final death principle. Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan was right when she pointed to the convention of choosing very young boys and girls to portray Rama and Sita, as these characters are the symbols of life and its struggle which is ageless and which transcends time.

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[1] The Ramayana story as reconstructed from wall paintings inside the temples of ' Vat Pa Ke ' in Luang Prabang and ' Vat Oup Muong ' in Vientiane has been published by me in two detailed papers in ' Studies in Indo-Asian Art and Culture', Acharya Raghuvira Commemoration Volumes Nos. 3 and 5, 1973 and 1977. Also see my Hindi ' Laos men Ramkatha '—Manas Sangam, Kanpur 1980.

[2] Dr. V. Raghavan, The Ramayana in Greater India, South Gujarat University, Surat, 1975, page 60.

[3] In the ' Ramakien ', Hanuman is the son of Svaha from God Vayu, brought forth at Isvara's bidding, who equipped him with all the divine weapons in order to help Rama. Hanuman remained for 30 months in his mother's womb and was born white. At birth he was already 16 years old.

[4] Sachchidananda Sahai, Ramayana in Laos, A study in the Gvay dvorahbi, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi 1976, Introduction p. 3.

[5] These were Louang Prabang, Vientiane and Champassac. In the civil war of 1960-61 the three princes were symbolized by Prince Souvannaphouma who was in Vientiane, Prince Souphanouvong, then in exile and now the President of the Republic of Laos and Prince Boun Oum of Champassak. At the time all the three princes recognized H. M. King Savanga Vatthana as their Royal head and chief and paid due respects to him.

[6] In the 'Phra Lak Phra Lam' Rama is shown ruling over Si Ayuthya (Luang Prabang Version) and Varanasi Nakhon (Vientiane Version).

Ravana's father Chao Birunahak is shown as the King of Inthapa tha- nakhon.

[7] Also because the GD states that it was situated outside Jambudvipa, the name by which India was known in these parts.

[8] In the Ramayana paintings in Vat Oup Muong in Vientiane, 101 Kings are shown as attending the marriage of Sita.

[9] In the Phra Lak Phra Lam also Virunahak is the father of Ravana. Information regarding the GD is based on Sachchidananda Sahai's edition the 'Gvay Dvorahbi'.

[10] This story about Sita's Birth as Ravana's daughter is common to the Phra Lak Phra Lam' and the Ramakien.

[11] The text reads 'Bari and Sugip, who was elder brother'—did not utter a word. The text is corrupt, The writer's intention seems to be that since Bari, the elder brother, did not utter a word, Sugip also kept quiet. cf. GD—p. 48, foot note.

[12] GD p. 48.

[13] GD p. 6.

[14] GD p. 49.

[15] In India Hanuman is described as the son of Siva as well as the son of Rama. Poet Tulsidas writing in the 16th century refers to Hanuman as the son of Rama. Actually Hanuman is the son of God Vayu.

[16] GD p. 10.

[17] The 101 Kings who had assembled to seek the hand of Sita also react in a strange way when they see her displaying 'feminine artifices of many kinds'. Each one of them believed Nan Sita to be satisfied with him, hence 'some poked out their tongues, rolled their eyes, clinched their teeth, and made grimaces. Some clenched their fists and pressed their hands together. Some strummed, sawed, struck or blew musical instruments, bin (Vina) and gong. Some of them danced embracing (each other). Some danced using their feet and hands. Some crawled and chased about playing like small children at cows and buffaloes' cf. GD page 40. Needless to say that these are extremely animistic and primitive methods of showing one's emotions.

[18] The incident with Surpanakha, Ravana's sister does not find a place in the GD.

[19] Of course, according to this version Phong Si, Hanuman's mother, was also Rama's wife, during the period when he lived as a monkey on top of the Manigrodha tree. According to Lao historian Maha Sila Viravong Rama has 16 wives in popular belief. This number is increased to 16 thousand in GD. Cf. also the legend which in India attributes 16,000 wives to Lord Krishna.

[20] In this respect the characters of the Ramayana in South-East Asia are quite opposed to their Indian counterparts who are either paragons of virtue or at the extreme end of wickedness.

[21] Although Valmiki mentions 'sringara-karuna-hasyaraudra-bhayanakaih' yet the appearance of hasya in the Ramayana is almost non-existent. cf., Valmiki Ramayana I—4-9.

[22] Valmiki Ramayana I—ch. 4.

[23] This is the only instance in the Rama Story anywhere when Sita is given the punishment of death.

[24] Asutosh Bhattacharya: Oral tradition of the Ramayana in Bengal, paper presented at the International Ramayana Seminar, New Delhi 1975.

[25] A study of the process of transmutation and change in pronunciation will throw more light on the localities through which the Ramayana travelled to different countries of South-East Asia.

[26] Valmiki Ramayana IV Chapters 9, 10, 11.

[27] This writer's first introduction to the Ramayana in Laos, was at the marriage ceremony of Princess Dala (Tara) daughter of H. M. King Savanga Vatthana, where episodes from the epic were presented before the guests.

[28] R. C. Majumdar, Indian Culture in S.E. Asia, Gujarat Vidya Sabha Ahmedabad, p. 3.

[29] So far not published. The analysis is based on P.B. Lafont's notes.

[30] R. C. Majumdar—Indian Culture in S.E. Asp. 7.

[31] The Ramacharita manasa chatusshati samiti, Bhopal (M.P.) has published some of them.

RAMAKERTIAN STUDIES

SAVEROS POU

Some time ago, I had the occasion to lay stress upon the existence of two main figures in Modern Khmer Civilization[1], i.e. the Buddha and Rāma. The Buddha is worshipped as 'The Teacher' (*śāstā* < Skt. *śāstṛ*) of the 'Sacred Law' (*braḥ dharm*) which has shaped the religious and ethical mind of the entire community, whilst Rām stands as a hero who is now fitted into the ethical frame of the' Teaching of the Buddha' (*buddhasāsanā*)[2]. Unlike the Buddha, Rām is no object of cult, nor has he any impac on Khmer philosophy; but like the Buddha, and equally so, he has been a tremendously prolific theme in the Khmer culture.

I

The Khmer Rāmāyaṇa bears the name of *Rāmakerti*—the only name, regardless of its cultural expression. This means fundamentally 'The Glory of Rām'; therefore, any recension's title, spelt as *Rīoeṇ Rāmakerti*, means 'The Story of Rām's Glory'. However, in the mind of the wider public, the name Rāmakerti alone stands for 'The Story of Rām'—Rām who is a divine hero no matter in what way they choose to treat the most famous episodes of his story.

1. Indeed, Rām is present in both art proper (major and minor) and literature, throughout the whole history of Cambodia[3].

His 'Story' has been an inexhaustible source of creation to artists of ancient Cambodia. Along with other Indian Epics[4], the Rāmāyaṇa provided the sculptors with numerous themes. They chiselled most impressive statues or carved various scenes on the walls of Khmer monuments.[5] Generally speaking, one tends to overlook the fact that Rāmāyaṇan bas-reliefs have contributed to the name of well-known angkorian temples, such as Banteay Srey or Bapuon, to culminate in the magnificent engravings on the walls of Angkor-Vat galleries.[6] Personally, I have no competance to elaborate on that matter, as I am not a historian of art, but I avail myself eagerly of the present occasion to lay stress on the quantity—and also the quality—of works, scholarly or non-scholarly, devoted to the Rāmāyaṇan art in Cambodia, as you can judge from the *Inventory* that I have compiled with two younger colleagues.[7]

We know that the heyday of Khmer sculpture faded away with the fall of Angkor (XVth c.), save the carving of two bas-reliefs at Angkor-Vat.[8] But, on the other hand, Postangkorian Cambodia shows a greater variety in artistic production. Modern Khmer artists carved out wood, cut out oxen—or buffalo-hide, painted walls of monuments, inspired by the most popular themes called from Rām's story, for the purpose of decoration or theatrical performance (cf. infra). To a lesser degree, the same favourite myths are perpetuated in art by ceramists and scores of highly skilled jewellers, up to the present day.

(2) When we turn to literature, we face a different story altogether. (No literary work prior to the XVth c. has survived, but numerous) stone-inscriptions, or epigraphs, have been preserved along with iconographies.

The epigraphy of Ancient Cambodia,[9] bilingual, consists of (*a*) versified Skt. texts—most of them beng panegyrics of kings, or *praśasti* (*b*) Old Khmer (O.K.) prose texts dealing with more down-to-earth matters. It must be noted that Rām was constantly lurking through O.K. texts. He was unquestionably one of the main figure-heads in the popular mythology, since his 'Story' provided many proper names for persons and also for places.

The Skt. verses, on the other hand, tell us that the Rāmāyaṇa, besides the Mahābhārata and the Pūrāṇa, was known in Cambodia long before angkorian time. For instance, Inscription K. 359 (VIth c.) mentions the offering of copies of the Great Epics to a temple and the daily recitation of the texts as well.[10] A survey of the many lengthy inscriptions of a laudative nature, or *praśasti* reveals that the kings were favourably compared with the Moon, then Brahmanic gods and heroes, such as Arjuna and Rāma. Inscription K. 289 of the XIth c. [11], for instance, praises a valorous general named Saṅgrāma and, incidentally, depicts him facing his enemy as ' Rāma with Rāvaṇa' :

' ...*yathā rāmarāvaṇau* ' (C. 34).

And most of all, panegyrists stressed that kings were driven, in their valiant behaviour, by the pursuit of ' fame ', or *kīrti*—on which subject I shall elaborate later (cf. III). Thus, we have a great deal of evidence from the epigraphy on how well the Rāmāyaṇa was known to the Ancient Khmers, and yet no trace of any local literary composition has survived.

Poems on the Story of Rāma, called *Rāmakerti*, appeared in the middle period of Khmer. The oldest one goes back to the XVIth-XVIIth c., which I proposed to call *Rāmakerti* I (R.I.). I must immediately caution that the given date has been worked out from the actual form (linguistic and literary) of the poem and its Theravādin background[12]. But its contents speak of an age-long tradition of Rāmakerti. Therefore, R.I. must be viewed as a processed form of Rāmāyaṇa composition(s) produced in olden times.

From the XVth c. onwards, Rāma's Story became an impetus in Khmer literature, mainly in the epic genre, whereby lengthy poems were composed as recitatives for the dance-drama called *Lkhon khol*[13]. In the meantime, the unparalleled, skilled bards[14] memorized mixed narrative texts (i.e. verse and prose) inherited from the past and recited them either in the village-gatherings or on more solemn festive occasions.

II

1. At the turn of the XIXth c., Rāmakerti as depicted on the ancient monuments mesmerized the first European visitors, as we can judge from their travel-books. Then, it became the focus for attention of French scholars, viz., under the auspices of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient founded in 1900. After the assiduous and painstaking effort of E. Aymonier to bring to light every iconographic detail found in all the territory of Ancient

Cambodia,[15] brilliant historians and archaeologists, in restoring monuments and reconstructing their history, tackled the arduous task of identifying epic scenes. L. Finot, V. Goloubew and G. Coedès were among this outstanding team of scholars, and their achievements are too well-known to call for a reminder.

In connection with our topic, it is more important to point out one difficulty encountered by the scholars during those years of laborious identification. Quite understandably they relied upon Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa in their work. They soon noticed that all the bas-reliefs did not fit into Vālmīkian frame. Fortunately, they did not remain nonplussed by that staggering discrepancy, as they were guided by their insight to another source, i.e. local Rāmāyaṇa compositions. This became an axiom, therefore a stimulus for Rāmakertian investigations.

2. In the first instance, historians of art turned to literature for the answers to some iconographic riddles. The first prominent scholar committed to the task was S. Karpelès who was then a Director of the Phnompenh Buddhist Institute. An Indologist, she knew well Vālmīki ; she also became interested in the Thai Rāmakien which was apparently more accessible than the Khmer counterpart and cognate, and overshadowing it to a great extent. S. Karpelès was the first scholar to sense that, contrary to contemporary consensus, Thai Rāmakien evolved from Khmer Rāmakerti, and she expressed this view in her article ' Un èpisode du Rāmāyaṇa siamois '(1925)[16].

She then turned to the main collections of Rāmakerti manuscripts with a view to publish them. She set the Buddhist Institute to task, and the outcome was the publication of 16 booklets under the title of *Rīoeṅ Rāmakerti* (RIB) numbered after the mss. from 1 to 10 and 75 to 80[17] which were overwhelmingly greeted by everybody, as they rightly deserved.

However, in actual fact, this was not a critical edition, as it timidly claimed. The readers, even the native Khmers, could follow the main lines of the narration without being able to grasp the meaning of all words, let alone the sense and the spirit of the entire work

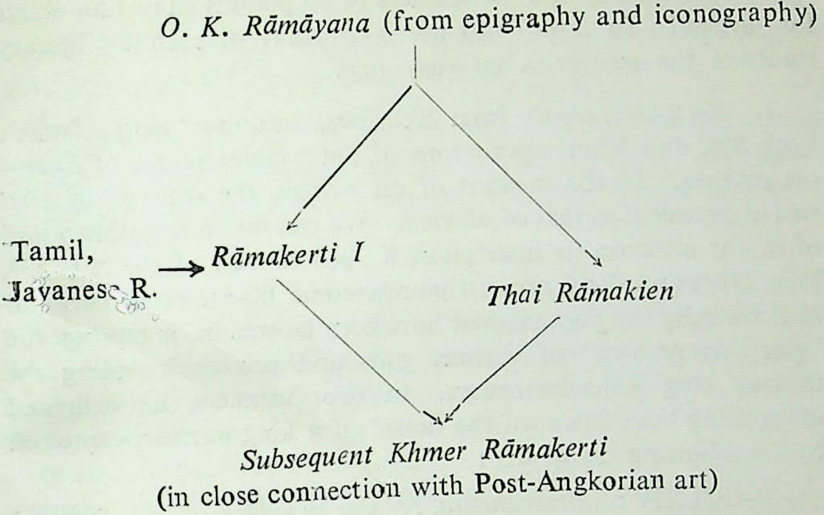
The only positive result was the hint that RIB recension stood between the Ancient stone bas-reliefs and the current popular versions of Rāmakerti. But, on the whole, it remained veiled in mystery, while the Khmer people went on cultivating popular myths, excellent suppliers of emotion and mirth.

At this juncture, the linguist F. Martini realized that only a linguistic study, combined with an inborn sense of Khmer and Khmer culture, would truly sort out that text. He began a French translation of RIB, painstakingly because of the size of the collection. This work was carried out over a good many years without F. Martini succeeding to determine a *date* for the text. In addition, he was increasingly hampered by ill-health, therefore he handed on the project to S. Pou, his student, also a linguist,before he gave it up entirely.[18] At Martini's death (1965), the feeling was stronger than ever that RIB text should span the gap between the Rāmāyaṇan antiquities and all the popular stories—in a very broad sense (cf. infra, Chart).

This is how I entered the Rāmakertian field of research. I was not much wiser than all my predecessors, but I was firmly convinced that priority must be given to linguistic analysis of RIB. The outcoming identification would provide the key, the only one, to other literary versions of Rāmakerti as well as other forms of art.

With this approach, with the spiritual guidance of G. Coedès and the moral backing of the then prominent Indologists in Paris, I explored the main dated so-called Middle-Khmer texts in order to set up a pattern of comparison. The first findng—yet in the form of a hypothesis—was that RIB text contained two different versions. I then set aside the second part (75-80) to concentrate on the first one which proved the oldest version of all existing ones and which I named *Rāmakerti I* (cf. supra, I.2.). Besides, following a golden rule of linguistics whereby we must work on accurate data in order to define the meaning of words or the structure of a language, I undertook the *description* of R.I. [19] and, in so doing, set the foundation stone of Rāmakertian philology.

The following chart will show the genealogy of Rāmakerti :


O. K. *Rāmāyana* (from epigraphy and iconography)
Tamil, Javanese R.
Rāmakerti I
Thai Rāmakien
Subsequent Khmer Rāmakerti
(in close connection with Post-Angkorian art)

This chart also highlights the processing of Vālmīki's epic since it took root in Cambodia. It is granted that Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa became naturalized here, as anywhere else. In the process, the volume of Rāmakerti increased by a good many interpolations (episodes and characters)—which incidentally required a fair dating—[20], and the grip of Buddhist philosophy, as well as Brahmanic culture, loosened to make room for more and more magical myths. Nonetheless, the evolution of Rāmakerti in Cambodia shows a *continuum* with the figure of Rām—to a lesser degree of Sītā and Laks. The popularization of the epic—the main implications of which are the lax ethics and a lesser literary concern—has left Rām, untouched and unblemished. He remains the same virtuous and righteous hero, far above all the vagaries of human imagination. And that is the mark of Rāmakertian heritage, as a true Khmer tradition.

III

In other words, the adventurous, farcical and magical interludes in Rāmakerti are of adventitious nature. The unbroken core of Khmer tradition is 'The Glory of Rām', or, as seen from the poet's standpoint,' 'the Glorification of Rām', a hero.

The linguistic evidence is in the element *-kerti* of the Khmer epic's name. Why did the Khmers of all periods substitute *-kerti* for *-ayana*? To those who are conversant with Khmer literary tradition the answer is an easy one.

1. *Kerti*/kee/, stems from Skt. *kīrti*, meaning 'glory, fame'. Both Skt. and Khm. inscriptions of old contain scores of *kīrti*— occurrences. In the thought of all writers, the concept of *kīrti* was as prevalent as that of *dharma*. We can find a fair illustration of it, for instance, in Inscription K. 806 in Skt. of the Xth c.[21]. This 298 stanza-long *praśasti* counts some fifteen occurrences of *kīrti* whereby the poet showed how keen he was in analysing the 'glory or renown' of various gods and princes, including the famous king Rājendravarman. In two instances, he delighted in stressing 'the flower of the fame' of a king-warrior, expressed by the following metaphors :

—CCLXIV : *kīrtimandāra*.., 'the *mandāra* of the fame..' (*mandāra* being the heaven's tree Erythrina Indica, and its flower),

—CCLXVI : *kīrtikusuma*,' the flower of the renown'.

2. The Middle-Khmer literature develops, besides the epic genre, a didactic on which consists of short gnomic versified texts called *Cpāp*, or 'Codes of conduct'. They were meant for all people of good-will, up and down the community, regardless of their background. All men were instructed to model their behaviour and outlook on those set up by wise men of old (*purāṇ*), and along the lines of the Buddha's Teaching, in order to preserve their 'Heritage or Patrimony' (*kerti*) and attain a 'good renown, or fame' (*kerti* as well). In the particular case of the summit of the society, viz., princes and their high-ranking followers, they were taught the ethics of the Buddha's Teaching, of course, the wisdom of the Bodhisattvas and the lofty majesty of the hero Rām.[22]

To sum up, Middle-Khmer literature, in all its expression, carried on the same idealistic pursuit of 'fame, glory' (*kerti*) and fitted it into the Theravādin frame. It becomes evident to us, then, that there has existed a genuine Khmer *paramparā* of poets and artists, endlessly praising the pursuit of 'fame', and symbolically 'the Glory of Rām', or *Rāma-kerti*[23].

IV

All the foregoing might have appeared very ethnocentric, and yet I make no apology for that because of two reasons.

First, I do not want to miss the excellent opportunity offered by this gathering of learned scholars involved in Rāmayaṇa studies to present the little-known Rāmakerti and correct some erroneous current views.

The second reason is linked with methodology. Philology has so far enabled us to have a fairly accurate idea of literary Rāmakerti within the Khmer culture. Should I now move on to comparing it with other Rāmāyaṇa, as it has been suggested by well-wishing colleagues ? To my mind, this would be rather unwise, even unrealistic, because of (*a*) the magnitude of the task, (*b*) the golden rule of descriptive linguistics alluded to (cf. supra).

Personally, I shall carry on philological research, aiming at publishing all available texts—of course, keeping an eye widely open on all works done in conjunction with other Rāmāyaṇa, as this is part of what is called in German our ' Bildung '. Further, from the Khmerologist's view point, philology greatly relies on the evidence of art, and the artistic field lies beyond my ability. This already suggests how imperative it is to share the task between scholars. In art, it must be pointed out that the field of post-Angkorian Cambodia has been surveyed by scattered young scholars (on sculpture, dance, etc.) and first and foremost by M. Giteau in her prolific output[24]. However, our need goes further and should follow two main lines : (*a*) a review of past research on epigraphy and iconography, followed by a new appraisal, (*b*) further research in various sections of art, closely linked with literature. And if students of art can collaborate more closely with linguistis, we would all in one field achieve greater efficiency in research.

Then, only then, the results of our combined efforts in the Khmer field would be made available to scholars of Sanskrit and Indian Civilization, involved in comparison. S. Karpelès, with her remarkable insight, paved the way for comparatists in the years '20, insisting on Khmer and Thai Rāmāyaṇa without neglecting the possibility of a link between those and the Javanese

Rāmāyaṇa. More recently, V. Raghavan gave a strong impetus to comparative studies which were too soon interrupted by his death (1979). Dr. S. Singaravelu has contributed by building a bridge between South India and Souh-east Asia and I believe that Dr. J.L. Brockington is involved in a comparison of an even larger scale. These scholars need our monographic studies, and we, in our specialized fields, shall, without doubt, in turn profit from their works, thereby shall improve our knowledge, too, and occasionally our methods and our views, and produce more useful documents for further research.

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[1] See *Etudes sur le Rāmakerti* . . . (1977), p. 1-2.

[2] See *Ibid.*, p. 51-98.

[3] Historians of art speak of 3 periods :

(*a*) Pre-angkorian (→ IXth c.)
(*b*) Angkorian (IXth-Mid. XVth c.)
(*c*) Post-angkorian (Mid. XVth c. onwards)

In linguistics and literature, we keep the same trisection, but differently based :

(*a*) Old Khmer (→ XIVth c.)
(*b*) Middle Khmer (XVth-Mid. XVIIIth c.)
(*c*) Modern Khmer (Mid. XVIIIth c. onwards)

In any case, 'Ancient Cambodia' can be used in art as well as language when one refers to Historical Cambodia before the XVth c.

[4] Majumdar, R. C. (1946), 'The Indian Epics in Indo-China'.

[5] Nowadays situated in Cambodia and neighbouring countries.

[6] See mainly G. Coedès, L. Finot & V. Goloubew (1932), *Le temple d'Angkor Vat*.

[7] 'Inventory of the Rāmāyaṇa studies (Cambodia)', compiled by S. Pou Lan Sunnary and K. Haksrea.

[8] See G. Coedès (1962), 'La date d'execution des deux bas-reliefs tardifs d'Angkor Vat'.

[9] See mainly G. Coedés (1937-66), *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, 8 vol.

[10] See A. Barth (1885), *Inscriptions sanscrites du Cambodge*, p. 28-31.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 140-172.

[12] See *Etudes sur* . . . , op. cit.

[13] In Cambodia—as in Thailand—'The Story of Rām' has three dramatic representations, to wit a) the Shadow-Theatre, called *ṇāṃṅ, dhaṃ* or *ṇāṃṅ spaek*, (*b*) the Ballet, or *rapāṃ*, (*c*) *Lkhon khol*, sometimes called 'Masked Theatre' by European authors.

It can be said without exaggeration that *Lkhon khol* ranks first in the Khmer dramatic art, as much dear to the heart of the community as famous in the eyes of foreign observers. It can be described as a dance-drama the repertoire of which consists solely of Rāmakerti. It requires substantial recitatives declaimed by skilled reciters, accompanied by an important orchestra, while the actors mime every single detail of the narrative, dance or perform acrobatics as the case may be. Those who play the part of demons and monkeys wear masks, hence the name of 'Masked Theatre' (cf. supra).

Lkhon khol is a folk-theatre in the sense that it is not based on regular professional performance. The actor-dancers are all male villagers, very talented men committed to this highly specialized dramatic tradition. They are called upon to perform during great festivals, such as New Year celebrations, anniversaries and funerals of high-ranking religious or lay personalities. They rehearse between two sessions of farm-works and play many nights on end in the case of a full show of Rāmakerti [See for instance S. Sem (1967, 1972), ' Lokhon khol au village de Svay-Andet, son rôle dans les rites agraires ']. Some *Lkhon khol* ' companies ' reach such a fame that they are hired, for the same purpose as seen above, to perform outside their own locality. This accounts for *Lkhon khol* shows in the capital on some of the official solemn occasions, under the reign of Ang Duong, Norodom and Sisowath (See A. Leclére, *Cambodge, Fêtes civiles et religieuses*).

In modern times, while the village tradition has been kept alive, Rāmakerti at the Royal Palace was confined to the repertoire of *rapāṃ* or Ballet. Generally speaking, it was even restricted to a few extracts from the modern Khmer epic, the most popular of which, in recent years, were the episode of the abduction of Sītā by Rāb and the fight betwen the demon Rāmaparamasūr (Skt. *Paraśurāma*) and the goddess Maṇimekhalā.

It would be interesting to examine once more the etymology of *Lkhon khol*. *Lkhon* is unquestionably a Malay (or Javanese) loan, *Lakuan*, meaning in Khmer ' theatre '. *Khol*, as a specifier of *Lkhon*, has been controversial for long. Since it is reflected in Thai by *khon*, most people tended to view it as a Thai loan in Khmer, alongside with the glamour of Thai Rāmakien. In my view, the most sensible etymology was given by G. Coedès in his article (1963), ' Origine et évolution . . . ', p. 499-500, to wit *khol* is none but the Khmer word for ' a species of monkey, his antics ; anything burlesque '. *Lkhon khol*, therefore, can be understood as ' Theatre of monkeys ', or ' Burlesque theatre '.

[14] The best illustration is ' The Story of Rām ' as told by Grandfather Cak ', in F. Bizot (1973), *Rīoeṅ Rāmakerti nai Tā Cak* '.

[15] See mainly *Le Cambodge* (1900-04).

[16] Cf. ' On éprouve quelques regrets, en songeant qu'un érudit, tel que le roi Rāma VI, n'ait pas étendu le champ de ses recherches en dehors de son royaume et qu'il ait passé sous silence la version cambodgienne, soeur ainée des rédactions siamoises.' (p. 316).

[17] See References.

[18] His translation was posthumously published as *La gloire de Rāma*(1978).

[19] In *Etudes . . .*, op. cit., which accompanied the French translation *Rāmakerti (XVIé-XVIIé siécles)*, (1977), followed two years later by my autographic recension (see References).

[20] Thai Rāmakien, evolving from older Khmer versions of Rāmakerti, has had a strong influence upon Post-Angkorian art, as S. Karpelés suggested since 1925 in ' Un épisode . . . ', *op. cit.*, p. 318, n. 2.

[21] See G. Coedés (1937), *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, I, p. 73-142.

[22] Although gnomic didactic literature is common to all countries in Southeast Asia in the footsteps of India, only Khmer writers have cultivated this type of composition throughout the history, to the extent of building up a typical *genre littéraire* among all others, called *Cpāp* ' (Cf. as the *Lied* is typical of the German culture). For a survey, see S. Pou, ' La littérature didactique khmére: les *Cpāp* ' ", followed by S. Pou & K. Haksrea, " Liste d'ouvrages de *Cpāp* ' ", in *JA*, 1980, p. 309-339.

[23] See, for instance, *Rāmakerti I* (st. 3693-3696). When Bibhek (Vibhīṣaṇa) joined Ram's camp after fleeing his brother Rab's wrath, he was interviewed by the hero as follows :

> ' Alors le glorieux Nārāy-Rāmā monte dans son pavillon de victoire
> ' et, noble et souriant, il s'empresse de questionner l'astrologue Bibhek :
> ' 'O démon ! Comment donc ! Tu es notre ennemi.
> ' C'est peut-être une ruse de ta part afin de nous exterminer ā la guerre et de détruire le renom de Rām! (*rāmakerti*) '. (Transl. S. Pou)

[24] See mainly her survey (1975), *Iconographie du Cambodge post-angkorien.*

Abbreviations

Khm. : Khmer
O.K. : Old Khmer
R.I. : Rāmakerti I
RIB : Rāmakerti (edited by the Phnom Penh Institut Bouddhique)
Skt. : Sanskrit

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THE REAMKER

F. BIZOT

Mi Chak of Khna Sanday (Banteay Srei) was ordained a monk at the age of 23, in 1920, at the south pagoda of Angkor Wat. It was there that he came to know the story of the Reamker from a voluminous manuscript on latanier leaves, which he learnt by heart. Nine years later he left the monkhood and returned home to work in the rice fields. However, his remarkable memory, his perfect diction and his fine sonorous voice soon revealed the exceptional gifts of the narrator. He quickly became known and was called upon to perform first at village festivals and then on the stage in the monastery theatres during the big people's celebrations lasting several days, which afforded him the only opportunity to show the measure of his talent in relating the complete stay of the Reamker.

In 1969, I invited *tā Chak* to come and relate his narrative and therefore to stay in Srah Srang (Angkor), where I was living, for as long as necessary. The narration lasted ten days, at the rate of about five hours a day. Wanting to give the complete story, and also to demonstrate his masterly skill, the old narrator, heedless of the danger he ran in reliving the death of King Rāb, portrayed in detail the fatal moment never represented in art or played on the stage. However, the episode was repeated a little later on a favourable date in the course of a small ceremony during which the old man sang of the poignant agony of Yaks, surrounded by villagers, beside a platter laden with ritual offerings and before a monk from Angkor Wat who immediately pronounced the propitiatory formulae and blessed the daring narrator.

The narrative technique of old *Chak* lay in a consummate art which he acquired as he studied the manuscript. The presentation, arrangement and general ordering of the text, by conventional series of images assembled each in turn on the very simple web of the plots, were designed for the memory in such a way that it could immediately apprehend equally well the whole of the action as one single part of it, each episode being fixed in the mind with the help of classical patterns (literary artifices, poetic themes and clichēs, alliterations, narrative elements), proper to the traditional language of the narrations. This method had another advantage, in that it limited the personal part of the narrator to the use of those patterns only, in their placing and their frequency. Old *Chak* therefore did not transpose the written narration of his text into an oral version : his talent consisted not in passing from one mode of expression to another but in bringing alive the beauty of the poem by word and gesture.

As regards its content, it is hardly possible to put a date on *tā Chak's* account. All that can be dated is the formal state of the poem, transformed though it has been with the passage of generations. The possession of the manuscript used by *Mi Chak* would not necessarily have been more useful for that purpose, given the gradual linguistic modernization which almost always accompanies the passage of one copy of a text to another. However, such as it has been rendered and although the verbal expression is hardly datable, this account of the Reamker can philologically be put in the XVIIIth to XIIth centuries.

One inscription from Cambodia, the stele of Veal Kantel, mentions as far back as the VIIth century the gift made to a sanctuary of manuscripts of the *Mahābhārata* of *Purāṇa* (doubtless the *Harivaṃśa*) and of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, with which to institute the daily uninterrupted recitation.[1] The Rama tradition thus arrived in south-east Asia at an early date. The epigraph stipulates the name of *Rāmāyaṇa* and there is therefore no question of the *Rāmopākhyāna*, which is the story of Rām and Sītā included in the *Mahābhārata* and which contains curious differences as compared with the more ancient text of *Vālmīki*. It is therefore perhaps the Rāmāyana of Vālmīki that we are dealing with, but of that there is no certainty. It is also not inconceviable that we are in the presence of another version, possibly even one that has disappeared from India where it is not a rare occurrence for the variants of a text to succeed one another under the same title. In any case, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Harivamśa* (or even another *Purāna*) gave the Khmer a sufficiently rich collection of references to the story of Rām, unknown to a large extent in the poem of Vālmīki,[2] so that already in that era, the material gathered offered myriad alternatives for possible local arrangements. Consequently, owing to such lack of precision in the facts at the outset, or, more exactly, of such a diversity of documents and sources of Sanskrit origin thus attested, it would be gratuitous to put forward this pre-Angkorian mention as the basis of a hypothetical specific tradition of the cycle of this epoch, even if this first witness was to effectively place the origin of the later texts in Khmer, which is not even sure.

In this connection, one passage of *Mi Chak's* account deserves attention, and that is the episode of the destruction and reconstruction by the fishes of the causeway which Rām throws on the ocean in order to reach Lankā (§ 26). This original scene, which could be believed to have emerged from a local development or the imagination of the narrator, was portrayed in the XIIth century on a lintel at Pimai (west fore-part, west face), where it most discreetly occupies just one corner of the picture. Now, this singular detail of the fish seizing in their mouths the stones laid by the monkeys does not exist in the classic epic, but it did appear in the IXth century on a relief of *Candi Prambanam* in central Java.[3] The attack by the fish is found, however, in the Thai[4] and Malaysian[5] versions and in several Indian versions[6] other than that of Vālmīki. The example thus shows perfectly the confusion of the facts : it implies the existence of a tradition of the epic that is very ancient in south-east Asia, common notably to Indonesia and Cambodia, going beyond the poem of Vālmīki and the setting of Angkor—but not the Indian sources—and of which at least part of the modern versions in the Khmer, Thai and Malaysian languages have retained a trace.

Mi Chak's account is not the only version in Khmer that we have of the adventures of Rām : there is the Royal Library edition published by the Buddhist Institute of Phnom Penh. However, that edition consists only of 16 sections numbered from 1 to 10 and from 75 to 80. each corresponding to a file of handwritten ōles.[7] The work is in verse form adapted for stage presentation and cut up into songs, with indications for choir or orchestra.

This Reamker of the Buddhist Institute (RIB) is distinguished in the first instance from *Mi Chak's* account by a certain number of points which are not found in the latter, as for example : the reference to the ploughing at the time of the discovery of Sītā (RIB, verses 39-40 of the S. Pou edition) ; the episode of *Rāmaparasūr* (RIB, 157 *sq. et passim*) ; the episode of Kukhan (RIB, 327, *sq. et passim*) ; the importance given to the passages relating to Rām's exile and to the efforts made to convince him to return to Ayudya ; and the passage in which Rām points his finger at the stomach of Rāb who is flying over him accompanied by Sītā (RIB, 3936), etc. In other points, it recalls different versions : the Nāg on whose back seven palm trees are growing (RIB, 2313 *sq. et passim*)—a theme which is also found in the Javanese epic ;[8] the magic knot which Hanumān makes with the hair of the sleeping Rāb and Mandhogīrī (RIB, 2720 *sq.* and 4402 *sq.*)—a famous farce in the accounts in Thai and Malaysian which go back to an original Sanskrit ;[9] and Hanumān carried away beyond Lanka in his flight towards Sītā (RIB, 2628)—a detail which does not exist, again, in the *Rāmāyana* of Vālmīki but which is found in the *Torave Rāmayāna*[10] and the *Hikāyat Srī Rāma.*[11]

On the other hand, it does correspond to *Mi Chak's* account in certain typical and curious points, which are highly significant but which one cannot begin to enumerate here. One can only say that these two versions differ from the poem of Vālmīki especially in places where they accord with one another. Furthermore, it can be seen that the only two parts preserved belong rather to one single tradition, since they both correspond to a large degree to *Mi Chak's* account, even if in the verses at the beginning (the oldest) the resemblance is much less striking, the agreement with *Mi Chak's* account only starting roughly from Dubhī's fight with his father, that is, from chapter 12 of the S. Pou edition.

However, on the basis of *Mi Chak's* entire version, it is now possible to pick out many other curious characteristics of the Reamker which do not exist in the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki, and the origin of which should not be sought in the themes of indigenous folklore.

In the first place, as far as the order followed in the text is concerned, the Reamker does not copy the tradition of the accounts which are based on the story of Vālmīki. The Reamker begins with the origin of Rāb and the monkeys, more in the manner of *Rāmopākhyāna*, of certain *Purāna* and other texts like the Jaina *Paumacariya* of Vimalasūri of the Tibetan versions.[12] The *Bṛhaddharmapurāṇa*, 18, includes, from the beginning of the account, the partial intervention of Śiva and Pārvatī, without whose help Vishnu would not succeed in conquering Rāvana, Siva bringing his help precisely under the guise of Hanuman (§2. and 3). However, in the Reamker, it is Indra who changes himself into Nārāy, and then into Rām. The primacy curiously accorded to the ancient Vedic god, relegated in India to the simple rank of chief of the gods, inferior to those of the Brahman triad, might betray a non-Hindu influence, perhaps Jaina or Buddhist. In addition, as in the Lao versions, Sītā is the wife of Indra, having taken the vow, before committing suicide, that she will be born again to take revenge on Rāb, who has seduced her (§.6) ; she is then born in the breast of the latter's wife, as in the Tibetan versions, as in the Jaina *Uttara Purāṇa* of Guṇabhadra, and also as in the Khotan, Malaysian and Kashmīri legends.[13] The *Brahmavaivarta* (Prakrti-khanda, VI. 60.10) does in fact relate how the daughter of a Brahmarssi named Kusadhavaja, promised to Vishnu but desired by Rāvana, decides to immolate herself by fire so as to be reborn and lead Yaks to his doom. It is then interesting to note that the facts which motivated Daśaratha's promise to bestow the throne Ayudhya at first on the sons of his two latests wives (§ 8), which are found again in the *HSR* [14] are partly recorded in the *Pādma Purāṇa*,[15] in the *Brahma Purāṇa* (123), in the story of Rām in Gujarāt,[16] in a version from northern India[17] and in the Jaina *Rāmāyaṇa*.[18] In fact, in connexion with different circumstances, these passages all relate the intervention of Kaikeyī, at the moment when the axle of Daśaratha's chariot breaks : this intervention gives him the right to make the well-known vow. The magic birth of a frog in Mandhoghirī, future wife of Rāb (§ 15), an episode which contains several points of comparison with the *HSR*,[19] recalls the *Dharmaparīkṣā* of Jainist Amitagati,[20] The episode in which, in front of his eldest son, Laks himself goes to try his strength and touch the magic weapon with his toe (§ 14), is found in the *HSR*,[21] as is the passage where Sugrib, in tears, is covered with a crust formed from the rheum of her eyes (§. 21).[22] That anecdote, also related in the Lao versions,[23] already appears in the *Ṭikā Rāmāyaṇa* of *Māhesvaradāsa*.[24] The birth of Hanumān (§ 2,3,4), relating to circumstances identical to those of the Malaysian version,[25] and a Thai version in yuon characters,[26] seems to be based on a passage of the *Śiva Mahāpurāṇa* : seeing Vishnu in the guise of a female dancer (Mohinī), Śiva emits his semen, which is collected by seven sages and then poured into the ear of Anjanā, who gives birth to Hanumān, the simiesque incarnation of Śiva.[27] It may also be thought that the episode in which Śiva imprudently grants his door-keeper (the future Rāb) the power to destroy whatever he points at with his finger (§ 2), which is also found in the Thai and Lao versions,[28] corresponds to a passage of the *Skanda Purāṇa* (5.3.67) in which Śiva bestows on the demon Kālaprstha (Vrkāsura in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, 18.88.13-16) the power to kill any person whose head he touches. As in the Reamker, the demon immediately wants to try it out on his master, who flees to ask the help of Vishnu who, in the guise of a dancer, gets the demon to imitate him and leads him to destroy himself by touching his own head. In the *Padma Purāṇa* (21-22 and *Uttara-Khanda*, 105), Rāvana is also represented as an old door-keeper. The birth of Angkat (§. 16) is related to events which are found striking style in the *HSR*; as is that of Bālī and Sūgrib (§. 4).[29] The episode in which, before the marriage, Sītā is hidden among the statues (§. 14), again appears in the *HSR*.[30] Hanumān's meeting with his masters resting under a tamarind tree (§ 13), which is also found in the Malaysian versions,[31] recalls with precision the *Pādma Purāṇa* (Pātāla khanda 112). Vālin's gesture in seizing the arrow fired at him by Rām before he is hit and dies (§. 21), which is also found in the Lao accounts,[32] corresponds to a passage from the Tamil legend of Kamban.[33] The episode in which Hanumān and Sūgrīb are taken prisoners by Jambūbān whom, however, they manage to put to sleep and lead to Vishnu's feet (§. 24), is also related in the *HSR*.[34] The quarrel of Hanumān, the white monkey, and Nilaek (or Nilaphat) the black monkey (§. 28), appears in the Tibetan and Malaysian versions.[35] The episode in which Hanumān, ravenous, receives from an ascetic a ball of rice which he cannot manage to eat in spite of his enormous hunger (§. 30), is found in the Lao and Malaysian versions.[36] The episode where the donkeys attempt to kill Hanumān with blows from a pestle (§ 30) is narrated in the *Grāy dvorahbi*.[37] It is interesting to note that the *HSR* interprets with some differences one of the adventures in this passage ; whlie in the Reamker, only the garments of Mandhogīrī, who takes off her clothes in front of the monkey, cover Hanumān, in the *HSR*, Hanumān stops growing bigger when Rāb, having had Sītā brought to him, is getting ready to use her garments as a last resort.[38] The episode in which Rām is carried off (§ 46) appears in numerous Lao, Thai, Malaysian, Bengali and Indian versions[39] (except that of Vālmīki), in most of which are found, with astonishing precision, certain details contained in the Reamker, such as that of the stem of the lotus by means of which one penetrates the subterranean world, the metamorphosis of Hanumān into a fly and the monkey's final fight with his son. The passage where Hanumān (or Angad) seduces Mandhogīrī in the face of Rāb to distract him from his magic concentration (§. 62) appears in the *HSR* and in the Jaina Rāmāyaṇa.[40] While the banishment of the newly found Sītā is motivated in the Vālmīki version by suspicion of her on the part of the people of the kingdom, in the Reamker, in accord with the Thai, Lao, Malaysian, Bengali, Javanese, Kashmiri, Singhalese and Indian versions,[41] it is explained by the anger of Rām, who discovers the portrait of Rāb drawn by Sītā (§. 72). The magic creation of the second son of Sītā by the hermit (§. 73), another theme of the Lao and Malaysian versions,[42] exists in the later Indian texts, according to which it is the sage Vālmīki (cf. the reference made in the last part of RIB translated by F. Martini, p. 151) who creates the second child with the herb kuśa.[43]

Another question that must hold our attention without it being possible to dwell thereon for the time being is the identity, established in a number of versions, between Rām, Brahman hero, avatār of Vishnu, and Bodhisattva, future Buddha. However, the hybrid character of the beliefs is too real in all south-east Asia, too general, too institutionalised and based on a manuscript literature which is too abundant (but still barely studied), to be reduced, without an in-depth study of all the facts, to the result of some scattered indigenous actions. The existence of this supposed 'confusion' (between Rām/Vishnu and Rām/Bodhisattva-Buddha)—apt, in fact for a set of beliefs in which Buddhism and Brahmanism join—is common to all the Buddhist

Indo-chinese peninsula, and this should exclude the possibility of treating the religious aspect of the Reamker as a unique, independent and isolated phenomenon. Its study cannot be separated either from that of the religion of Cambodia (of which one knows very little) or from that of the neighbouring countries, or, doubtless, from that of certain Indian or Singhalese forms, still almost unknown,[44] in view of the fact that obviously the phenomenon is a global one.

It is known, however, that the Sanskrit poem was transposed at an early date into philosophical allegory. The *Adhyātma-rāmāyana*, attached to the last of the great *Purāṇas* (the *Brahmāṇḍa-Pur°*), combines a tantrist representation with the epic in which Rām is identified with the Paramātman and Sītā with the Māyā-sakti.[45] The *Mahābhārata* is also rich in interpolations serving as support to the account but dealing in fact with the *dharma* and the deliverance through the teachings of Buddhism, that are in fact, close, which continue the thought of the *Upanishad.* Other parts, like the *Anugīta*, vulgarize still further the doctrines of *Sāmkhya-Yoga* combined with the Vedānta and the theory of the breaths.[46]

The fact that this esoteric tradition of the great Indian literary classics should be found flourishing in Java is of the greatest interest. Several authors have already pointed out the symbolic meaning contained in the themes of wayang, the traditional shadow-theatre, derived for the most part from the didactic sections of the *Mahābhārata.*[47] Different sects exist in Javanese society each adhering to a body of legends seen through a destructive symbolism. The horses of Krsna's chariot as well as the personages associated with that scene in the 'Lakon kresna duta' are, for example, the subject of a hidden reading which reveals an image of unification of the intellectual and mental faculties comparable with those to be found in the *Bhagavad Gītā.*[48] The cycle of Rām as it is represented in the Javanese wayang, in short, is an illustration of the spiritual quest of the meditator, that is, an initiation into the way that leads to Nibbāna.

This presence of a philosophical teaching hidden under the interpolation is also a part of the deep values attached to the Reamker. The principal occult significance of the legend lies in the following code :

Rām — *çitt* (the conscience)
Laks — *cetasik* (the mental factors)
Hanumān — the breath (khyal)
Sītā — the crystal globe (tuon kèv)

We know the governing idea of the thought of Mahānikāy : the quest for immortality by the Yogāvacar (the 'Spirit of the initiated').[49] This quest is taught to the child-spirits, Cittakumāra-Cittakumarī, by Yamarāj, the King of the Nether-world. It consists of acquiring the 'crystal globe' kept in the fruit of the fig tree with five branches which grows in the country of the Jambosiers, inside a city protected by seven walls and guarded by the ferocious birds Indriy.[50] The allegory lies in fact in a technical teaching of internal displacement of the breath that passes through the nose, the neck, the sternum, the navel and the coccyx, and of its retention in these successive centres, so as to perceive, after different stages marked by the appearance of specific colours and a blinding light—the crystal globe, vital, personal and eternal principle.[51]

The Yaks who prevent Rām from remaining united with Sītā are compared to the Indiry birds (which symbolize the senses) or to the 13 bad moods (pāpadhamm),[52] compared to Rāb and his twelve bothers. Their destruction is associated, as in the meditation manuals, with the displacements of the breath which goes from the nose to the neck, then from the neck to the chest, then from the nose to the sternum, etc. ;[53] these displacements are those of embryonic respiration and symbolize the ceaseless travels of Hanumān, the 'son of the wind', perpetually sent on mission by Rām. It is indeed stated that his voluntary arrest inside Lanka is an image of the breath in retention at the level of the navel.

If the Yaks are the *pāpadhamm*, the monkeys represent the virtues (*guṇ*). Thus Rām's allies are put in relation to the mental exercises (*kamatthān*) of Vipassanākammatthan, the 5 *pīti*, the 6 *yugal*, the 5 *jhān* ; the 10 *kasin*, the 10 *asubh*, the 10 *anussati*, the 4 *brahmavihār*, etc.[54]

In brief, while the commentaries vary, they all agree on the essential idea : the Reamker is an illustration of the spiritual quest of the faithful (in this respect analogous to the Javanese wayang). Furthermore, in Cambodia, a 'way of Lankā'[55] is spoken of which leads the adept to cross the ocean so as to reach a distant island where stands the Meru. Now, the tradition of Mahānikāy compares this 'precious island of Lankā' with the mother's womb.[56] The question arises as to whether it is not precisely this hermeneutic of the epic that is at the basis of the comparison. In any event, for Rām the Yogāvacar, in his quest for the white Sītā as far as the other side of the ocean, the construction of the causeway constitutes an initiation test and, by his arrival in the island, he performs a *regressus* in the manner of Cittakumarā-Cittakumarī who reach the country of the Jambosiers (the mother's womb). The birth of his sons symbolizes, thereafter, the appearance of *nāmarūp* (Rām/brah Laks/*rup brah dhamm*, Jap brah Laks/*nām brah dhamm*), that is to say, the 21 bodily forms and the 12 subtle forms of the new form in gestation,[57] thanks to the care of the ascetic who is none other than the Maha Patthan of the texts.[58] It is interesting to note the manner in which the fact that the true rebirth of the initiated only occurs at the moment of death is then expressed. The final union of the lovers—for, unlike the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki, the Reamker concludes with a happy reunion—only comes, in fact, at the end of the account, after the test of the funeral urn : Hanumān (the breath) is sent to fetch Sītā (the crystal globe) who agrees this time to rejoin Rām (the spirit), who is lying at the foot of the cremation Meru but is not in fact dead and comes to life at the sight of his loved one. Before Sītā finally consents to go back to her husband for good, certain variants of the account go so far as to have the hermit burn an image of Rām :[59] the cremation of the funeral rites.

The symbolic structure of the account is simple : (1) preparation of the Yogāvacar (initiation of the four brothers) and test (marriage) which makes him experience the mystic union with the crystal globe ; (2) impossibility of keeping the latter (the kidnapping of Sītā) because of the bonds of existence which have to be destroyed one by one using the practice of Vipassanākammatthān (the combats) and a uterine regression (the crossing towards Lankā) ; (3) the appearance of the Name and the Form (birth of Rām's two sons) from the initiated body in gestation ; (4) rebirth (funeral ritual) of the Yogāvacar who alone finally attains the liberating union. Without envisaging the extreme possibility of a purely allegorical critique of all the divergent passages of the Reamker in relation to the classical versions of the Vālmīki type, it is certain that an episode, like, for example, the kidnapping of Rām, associated with the appearance of the ' star of the morning '—common image of the manuals of Vipassanākammatthān[60]—constitutes a philosophical interpolation. It must therefore be a matter for regret that we do not possess a more precise text or account of such an esoteric view of the Reamker, as it might have been possible to find therein the justification for many unusual aspects of that version.

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[1] K. 359 ; G. Coedes, *Inscriptions sanskrites du Cambodge*, IV, pp. 28-31

[2] V. Raghavan, *The Greater Ramayana*, Madras 1973.

[3] J. J. Boeles, ' A Rāmāyaṇa relief from Pimai ', *JSS.*, 1969.

[4] R. A. Olsson, *The Ramakien, a Prose Translation of the Thai Ramayana*, Bangkok 1968, § 65.

[5] *Hikayat Srī Rāma* ; A. Zieseniss, *The Rāma Saga in Malaysia, its Origin and Formation*, Singapore 1963, p. 69.

[6] *Setubandha*, 7.8 ; *Jānakīharaṇa*, 14.46 ; *Bāla Rāmāyaṇa*, 8.52 ; *Raṅganātha Rāmāyaṇa*, 25 ; *Torave Rāmāyaṇa*, 6.5 ; cf. C. Bulcke, *The Rāmakathā*, Allahabad 1971, p. 678.

[7] S. Karpeles, *Reamker*, éd. de la Bibliothèque royale, Phnom Penh 1937 ; *Rāmakerti (XVIe-XVIIe siécles), texte khmer publié par* S. Pou, PEFEO., CXVII, 1979 ; *Rāmakerti (XVIe-XVIIe siécles) traduit et commenté par* S. Pou, PEFEO., CX, 1977 ; S. Pou, *Etudes sur le Rāmakerti (XVIe-XVIIe siécles)*, PEFEO., CXI, 1977, pp. 9, 10 ; *La Gloire de Rāma, Rāmakerti, Rāmāyaṇa cambodgien*, Traduction de F. Martini, Introduction et notes de G. Martini, Préface de S. Thierry, Paris, 1978, p. XIV.

[8] Van Stein Callenfels, ' Le mariage de Draupadī ', *BEFEO.*, XXXIII, 1933, pp, 1-9.

[9] *Hanumān-Nāṭaka*, cf. H. H. Wilson, *Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus, Translated from the original Sanskrit*, 2. Vol., London 1835, II, p. 370.

[10] *Torave Rāmāyaṇa*, 5.1, cf. C. Bulcke, *op. cit.*, p. 495.

[11] A. Zieseniss, *The Rāma Saga in Malaysie*, Singapore 1963, p. 62.

[12] J. K. Balbir, *L.Histoire de Rāma en tibétain*, ' Coll. J. Przyluski ', Paris 1963, p. 18.

[13] *Ibidem*, p. 26 ; Guṇabhadra, *Uttara Purāṇa*, ed. Syādvāda Granthamālā no. 8, Indore 1918, sect. 68 ; H. W. Bailey, ' The Rama Story in Khotanese ', *J.O.A.S.*, vol. 59, pp. 460-468 ; J. Przylusky, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, XV, pp. 294-296 ; *The Kashmiri Rāmāyaṇa*, ed. G. A. Grierson, Bibliotheca India, Calcutta 1930.

[14] A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[15] Cf. E. C. Ravenshaw, 'The Avatars of Vishnoo, An abstract Translation from the Pudma-Pooran', *JASB.*, vol. XI., part. II, 1842.

[16] Narmadāsankar Lālsankar, *Narmakathakosh*, Surat 1870, p. 90.

[17] Sudhākaradvivedi, *Mahāmahopadhyāya, Rāmakahānī Bālakāṇḍa in easy Hindi*, Benares 1910, p. 3.

[18] Hemachandra, *Jaina Rāmāyaṇa, a Poem in Sanskrit in the life of Rāma*, Calcutta 1873, IV. 151-169.

[19] A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, pp. 15,16.

[20] N. Mironow, *Die Dharmaparīkṣā des Amitagati, Ein Beitrag zur Literatur und Religions geschichte des indischen Mittelarters*, Leipzig 1903, p. 27.

[21] A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

[22] *Ibidem*, pp. 51, 53.

[23] S. Sahai, *The Rāmāyaṇa in Laos, op. cit.*, p. 14.

[24] C. Bulcke, *op. cit.*, p. 462.

[25] A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

[26] R. Davis, *A Northern Thai Reader*, Bangkok 1970, pp. 70 sq.

[27] *Satuarudra Saṃhita*, 20. cf. également, R. S. D. Sen, *The Bengālī Rāmāyaṇa*, Calcutta 1920, p. 41.

[28] S. Sahai, *The Rāmāyaṇa in Laos, op. cit.*, p. 17, DHANI NIVAT, 'The Rāma Jātaka', *JSS.*, XXXVI, 1946, ou dans : *Collected articles by H. H. Prince DHANI NIVAT*, Bangkok 1976, p. 79.

[29] A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-36, 38-39.

[30] *Ibidem*, p. 23.

[31] *Ibidem*, p. 52.

[32] S. Sahai, *The Rāmāyaṇa in Laos, op. cit.*, p. 20.

[33] V. M. Gopalakrishnamachariyar, *Kambarāmāyaṇam*, Madras 1935-1955, IV. 7.

[34] A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

[35] J. K. Balbir, *op. cit.*, p. 37 ; A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

[36] S. Sahai, *The Rāmāyaṇa in Laos, op. cit.*, p. 22 ; A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.* p. 62.

[37] S. Sahai, *The Rāmāyaṇa in Laos, op. cit.*, p. 21.

[38] A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

[39] S. Sahai, *The Rāmāyaṇa in Laos, op. cit.*, p. 27 ; Rāma Jātaka (Dhani Nivat, *op. cit.*, p. 84) ; *Brahmacakra, op. cit.*, VII ; *HSR.* (A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-78) ; R. S. D. Sen, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-283 ; *Mairāvaṇacarit, Kṛttivāsa Rāmāyaṇa* (C. Bulcke, *op. cit.*, pp. 595-597).

[40] A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, p. 92 ; Hemachandra, *op. cit.*, VII, 335-350.

[41] Cf. les références nombreuses dans S. Sahai, *The Rāmāyaṇa in Laos, op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

[42] *Ibidem*, p. 31 ; A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.

[43] C. H. Tawney, *The Ocean of Story* (*Somadeva's Kathāsaritsāgara*), Delhi 1968, p. 128.

[44] F. Bizot, *Le don de soi-même, Recherches sur le bouddhisme khmer—III*, PEFEO., 1980 (sous presse).

[45] L. Renou, *MEI.* I, p. 422.

[46] *Ibidem*, p. 383, sq.

[47] Mangkunagoro VI, *On the Wayang Kulit (Purwa) and its Symbolic and Mystical Elements*, transl. C. Holt, Cornell data paper n°27, New York 1957 ; H. Ulbricht, *Wayang Purwa : Shadows of the Past*, Kuala Lumpur 1970 ; P. Stange, 'Mystical Symbolism in Javanese Wayang Mythology', *The South East Asian Review*, vol. I, Gaya 1977, pp. 109-122.

[48] P. Stange, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

[49] F. Bizot, *Le figuier a cinq branches, Recherches sur le bouddhisme khmer—I*, BEFEO., CVII, 1976 (RBK, I.), p. 85.

[50] RBK, I., p. 80 sq.

[51] RBK, I. p. 75 et passim ; cf. égalemant : F. Bizot, ' La grotte de la naissance, Recherches sur le bouddhisme khmer—II ', *BEFEO.*, 1980 (RBK II.), p. 249.

[52] RBK, I. p. 134 ; cf. également RBK, III., Chap. III.

[53] RBK, I., pp. 95 sq., 134.

[54] F. Bizot, *Voyage sur l'autre rive, Recherches sur le bouddhisme khmer—IV*, PEFEO (en préparation).

[55] *Ibidem.*

[56] RBK, III., *CV.* 9.

[57] RBK. I., pp. 78, 88 sq.

[58] RBK, I., p. 88 ; RBK, II., p. 247.

[59] Rāmker (*Rāmāyaṇa khmer*), Phnom Penh 1969, p. 59.

[60] RBK, II., pp. 248, 255.

THE LITERARY VERSION OF THE RAMA STORY IN MALAY

S. SINGARAVELU

THE literary version of the Rāma story in Malay is generally regarded as the manifestation of the cultural ideals of the ruling elite in the traditional Malay society. Since the Rāma story and the traditional Malay society shared in certain common cultural ideals such as righteous warfare, contests of skill and strength, undivided loyalty of the subjects to the king, and fidelity among the members of the family, the *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition was readily acceptable to the Malay society even after the adoption of Islam.[1] The high esteem in which the Rāma story was held is evident in some of the classical Malay historical works. Thus, for example, according to the author of the *Hikayat Acheh*, the lineage of Sultan Iskandar Muda, who ruled over Acheh between 1607 and 1635 A.D., was as glorious as that of Rāma, for the ruler's ancestors also had their origin in the bamboo clump (*buluh betung*), just as Rāma's mother is said to have been discovered in the bamboo clump by king Daśaratha in the Malay literary version of the Rāma story[2]. According to the *Sejarah Melayu*, the famous Malay hero Hang Tuah was called *Laksamāna*, because whenever he was jesting with youths of his own age, he would roll up his sleeves and defiantly declare that only Lakṣmaṇa was his match.[3] The *Sejarah Melayu* also records the fact that Hang Tuah was officially conferred with the title of *Laksamāna* during the reign of Sultan Mansur Shah (1459-1477 A.D.).[4] According to the *Sejarah Melayu*, by virtue of the conferment of the title *Lahsamāna*, Hang Tuah's status in the royal audience hall was equal to that of the Bendahara or Dato' Naradiraja, and whenever Dato' Naradiraja was absent, it was the *Laksamāna* who acted for him as the bearer of the sword of the state.[5] The conferment of the title *Laksamāna* on Hang Tuah, who was a high-placed dignitary in the ruler's immediate vicinity, is apparently based not only on the pre-Islamic royal Malay tradition which characterised the Malay ruler as the manifestation of the ideal king Rāma, but also on a popular Indian tradition, which refers to Rāma appointing his younger brother Lakṣmaṇa as the commander-in-chief of his realm at the time of his enthronement as king of Ayodhyā.[6] It is significant to note in this connexion that Hang Tuah identified himself as the commander-in-chief of the king of Malacca.[7] As regards the title *Laksamāna* being used to designate the Guardian of the sea-coast, or Admiral of the naval fleet in Malay kingdoms, this usage came into being apparently because the admiral played the role of the commander-in-chief in the Malay maritime kingdoms.

The literary version of the Rāma story in Malay, which is a long and comprehensive prose narration, is generally known as the *Hikayat Serī Rāma* ('Story, or Chronicle, of Śrī Rāma'). It would seem to have been written in its present form, or adapted to that form, in Perso-Arabic (*Jawi*) script after the coming of Islam to the Malay archipelago and peninsula by an unknown author sometime between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries A.D.[8]

The *Hikayat Serī Rāma* (*HSR*) has survived in several manuscripts, which contain differing recensions of essentially the same basic story or part of the same basic story. Of these, two recensions have been published, one by P.P. Roorda van Eysinga[9] in 1843, and the other by W.G. Shellabear[10] in 1915. It must be noted, however, that there are at least five other recensions of *HSR* still in manuscript form, of which brief accounts have been given by various scholars in their writings.[11] A significant feature of the various recensions of *HSR* is that, though they differ from each other in respect of certain aspects such as the sequence of episodes, name-forms, and the degree of Islamic influence found in them, there is nevertheless close identity between one text and the other in regard to their overall contents, and this characteristic would seem to indicate that all these texts were apparently derived from some older version of the Rāma story, which was a common source of all the recensions.[12]

The question regarding the source or sources of the original *HSR*[13] has been open to discussion for a long time ever since A.

Dozon refuted Roorda van Eysinga's description of *HSR* as a translation of Vālmīki's Sanskrit epic, by pointing out that *HSR* was indeed a distinct work, though dealing with the same characters and following for the most part the narrative of the Hindu epic.[14] Subsequently in 1899, H.H. Juynboll tried to trace the origin of *HSR* to the southern Indian Tamil source, because of the apparent Tamil-like forms of some proper names such as *Baradān*, *Bibūsānam*, and *Mahameru Parwātam*, occurring in the Malay version.[15] In 1919, Ph. S. van Ronkel also drew attention to some Dravidian or Tamil features relating to the name-forms such as *trisulam* in the Malay version, without however venturing to judge its origin.[16] In 1922, W.H. Rassers dealt with the problem of the sources of *HSR* in his work *De Pandji-roman*, by comparing the most important features of the Malay version and Vālmīki's epic, and his conclusion was that those motifs and episodes of *HSR*, which differed from the Sanskrit epic, were derived from Indonesian sources.[17] The next scholar to examine the question was W.F. Stutterheim, who thought that *HSR* had originated in Indonesia and that it had its source in a mixture of Indonesian tales and the predominantly oral tradition from the western as well as the eastern regions of the Indian sub-continent.[18] Three years later, A. Zieseniss wrote a systematic monograph by giving a full textual synopsis of the entire Malay tale in its two recensions, namely, the texts edited by Roorda van Eysinga and W.G. Shellabear, and comparing it with the Sanskrit epic of Vālmīki. His conclusions were twofold, namely, that the texts of both the Malay recensions were to be traced back to one original version, from which they originated orally, and that the Malay version is a more extensive form comprising of numerous innovations and amplifications drawn from diverse textual and oral legendary sources such as the *Purāṇas* and popular tales, which reached Indonesia from various parts of India, especially from the eastern and the western parts of India.[19]

Major Characteristics of HSR

The first major characteristic feature of *HSR* is that, unlike the Hindu versions such as the Sanskrit epic of Vālmīki, in which the story of Rāvaṇa's birth and antecedents is narrated separately by the sage Agastya to Rāma after his triumphant return from Laṅkā,[20] nearly all the recensions of *HSR* are known to commence the Rāma story with an account of Rāvaṇa's birth and antecedents.

as an integral part of the story, the only exception being the Roorda van Eysinga text (*HSR.*, *RO*), which begins with the events relating to the birth of Rāma.[21] It may be also recalled in this connection that a Malay recension of *HSR* is entitled *Hikayat Ceritera Maharaja Rawāna*, and this work also begins with an account of Rāvaṇa's birth and his early career.[22] A notable feature of the narrative relating to Rāvaṇa's ancestry in the Malay recensions contained in the Raffles and the Wilkinson manuscripts, is that they refer to a character named Sirancak, who is described as a ravisher of beautiful women in the heavenly world of Kĕindraan, and who reincarnates himself as Rāvaṇa, the son of Citrabaha and the grandson of Beramaraja in the earthly kingdom known as Indrapuri. The motif of Sirancak reincarnating himself as Rāvaṇa is reminiscent of the references in the Hindu *Purāṇas* to the demon Hiraṇyākṣa reincarnating himself as Rāvaṇa.[23]

Another significant feature to be found in certain recensions of *HSR* such as the Bodleian, or Shellabear text (*HSR.*, *SH*) and the Berlin text of *Hikayat Maharaja Rawāna*, is that some episodes relating to the antecedents of Rāvaṇa have been remoulded on Islamic lines, and indeed, Rāvaṇa's tale is depicted as unfolding during the time of the Prophet Adam. According to the Raffles and the Wilkinson manuscripts, Rāvaṇa at the age of twelve is banished by his grandfather to the island of Bukit Serendib (Lankā) as a punishment for maltreating his playmates. Rāvaṇa then becomes an ascetic and performs penance by hanging head downwards over a fire at night for twelve years. According to the Shellabear text, Allah Subhanahu-wata'ala sends down the Prophet Adam to meet Rāvaṇa at the time of his ascetic practices and convey to him his granting of a boon of sovereignty over the four kingdoms, namely, the Kĕndraan, the Netherworld, the Sea and the Earth, on condition that he rules over the kingdom justly. It is also noteworthy that in the Shellabear text, which is believed to contain a younger recension than the other texts, Allah Ta'ala takes the place of Lord Brahmā, who confers the boon of invincibility on Rāvaṇa in the Hindu versions of the Rāma story and that king Daśaratha is said to be the great grandson of the Prophet Adam.[24]

The story of Lord Viṣṇu's reincarnation as Rāma would also seem to have been subjected to varying degrees of Islamic bowdleri-

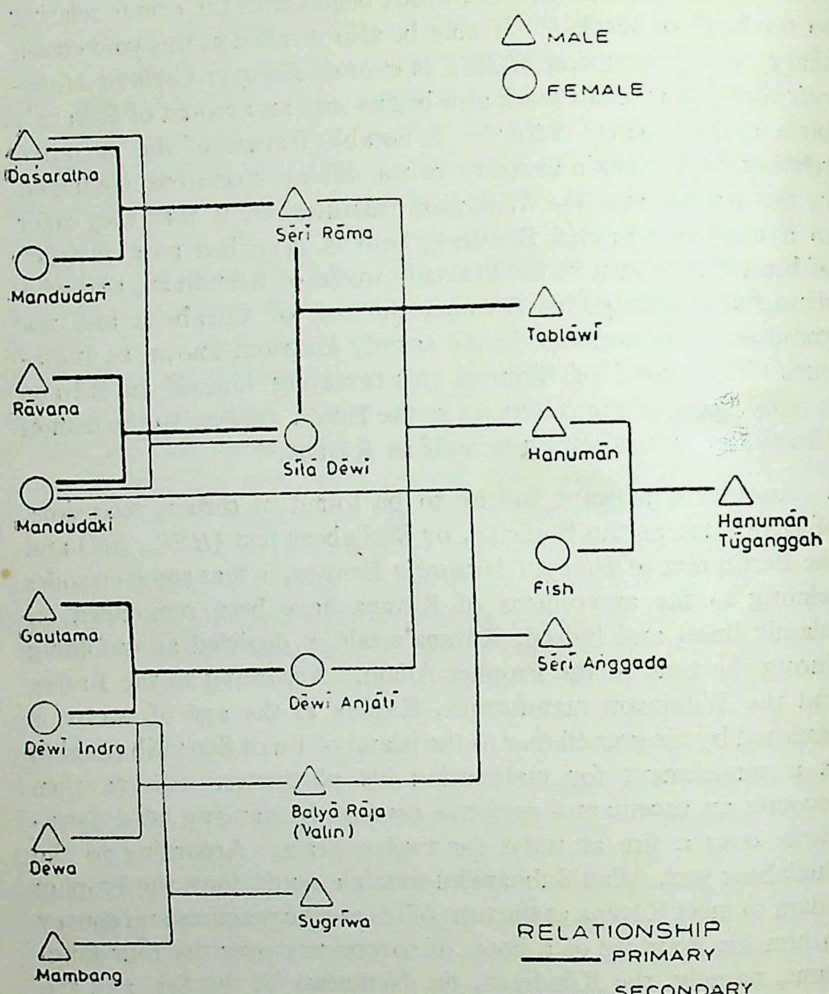
MALE
FEMALE
Dasaratha
Mandūdāri
Rāvaṇa
Mandūdāki
Gautama
Dēwi Indra
Dēwa
Mambang
Sēri Rāma
Sitā Dēwi
Dēwi Anjāti
Balyā Rāja (Valin)
Sugriwa
Tablāwi
Hanumān
Fish
Sēri Anggada
Hanumān Tūganggah
RELATIONSHIP
PRIMARY
SECONDARY

Fig. 1. The relationship of the chief characters in the Malay *Hikayat Sēri Rāma*

zation on the part of successive copyists of *HSR* manuscripts, in which the direct mention of Lord Viṣṇu's reincarnation has been excised, leaving only certain traces of the original version. Thus, for example, in the Shellabear text, Rāma is merely mentioned as being of emerald green complexion,[25] which is indeed the complexion of Rāma as the reincarnation of Lord Viṣṇu.[26] It may be also noted in this connexion that the Roorda van Eysinga's text, which is believed to contain an older recension than the Shellabear text, happens to retain certain passages making clear mention of Lord Viṣṇu's reincarnation as Rāma.[3]

Another notable feature of *HSR* is that the chief characters such as Rāma, Sīta, Rāvaṇa, Vālin, Sugrīva, and Hanumān are closely related to each other through their birth stories, and this feature may be illustrated in the diagram above (Fig. 1), showing their relationship. As for the details of the primary and the secondary relationships of the chief characters shown in the diagram, Rāma is the son of king Daśaratha and a princess named Mandūdārī, whom the king discovers in a bamboo clump. Rāma is said to have been born as the result of his mother partaking of the king's sacrificial meal (according to the Roorda van Eysinga text) and the bezoar stone or *gēliga* (according to the Shellabear text). Rāvaṇa, who hears of king Daśaratha's beautiful wife, demands to have Mandūdārī for himself. However, Mandūdārī resorts to a strategem of creating a replica, or a pseudo-image, of herself named Mandūdākī, who becomes Rāvaṇa's wife. King Daśaratha, who is enamoured of Mandūdākī's beauty, makes a clandestine visit to the inner apartment of Rāvaṇa's palace in Lankā and sleeps with Mandūdākī. Moreover, Rāvaṇa is also said to partake of a portion of king Daśaratha's sacrificial meal, which is brought to him by the crow-demon named Gagakswara. As a consequence of these events, Rāvaṇa's consort Mandūdakī gives birth to a daughter. Soon after her birth, the astrologers in Rāvaṇa's court including Bibūsānam (Vibhīṣaṇa) predict that the child will cause the destruction of Rāvaṇa. Though Rāvaṇa wants to kill the child there and then, finally in response to Mandūdākī's appeal he agrees to the suggestion that the child be abandoned. The infant is placed in an iron box and set adrift on the sea. Eventually, she becomes the adoptive daughter of Durwatipurwa's ruler Maharisi Kali, who names her Sītā Dewī. Subsequently, Sītā Dewī becomes

Rāma's wife after he wins her hand in an archery contest, in which the suitors are required to shoot through forty *lontar* palm trees with a single arrow from a divine bow. Thus, in *HSR*, Sītā is represented nominally as the daughter of Rāvaṇa as well as king Daśaratha through Mandūdākī, who is the pseudo-Mandūdārī, and she also happens to be Rāma's half-sister,[28] whom he marries after winning her hand in the archery contest, and subsequently Rāvaṇa carries off his own daughter.

As regards Rāma's relationship to Vālin, Sugrīva and Hanumān, according to *HSR*, Balya Rāja (Vālin) and Sugrīva are born of Dewī Indra, the wife of Bĕgawan Kutama (Gautama) as the result of her adultery with a divine being (*dewa*) and a spirit (*mambang*). Later when Bĕgawan Kutama immerses them into a pool of clear water in order to test their legitimacy, they become monkeys and vanish into the forest. Subsequently, Vālin becomes the ruler of the monkey kingdom and Sugrīva his deputy. Meanwhile, Dewī Indra curses her daughter Dewī Anjātī to keep her mouth wide open for a hundred years as a punishment for having exposed the secret of her adultery. When Dewī Anjātī is performing penance by standing on the point of a needle in the sea with her mouth wide open, Rāma's sperm is transferred by the wind-god into her open mouth,[29] and later she gives birth to Hanumān in the form of a white monkey with earrings. Hanuman's paternal great grandfather Sang Pĕrdana declares that Hanumān's father is one, who will recognise his earrings. Subsequently, Hanumān observes Rāma sleeping in the lap of Lakṣmaṇa under a tamarind tree, and after Rāma is awakened by him, Rāma recognises him as his son by his earrings. It would seem evident, from the above birth-stories of Vālin, Sugrīva and Hanumān that Hanumān is a son of Rāma and Dewī Anjātī, who is the sister of Vālin and Sugrīva, and thus Rāma, Vālin, Sugrīva, and Hanumān are related to each other.

As regards Rāvaṇa's relationship to Vālin, Sugrīva and Hanumān, according to *HSR*, when Rāvaṇa is on his way to Laṅkā with his consort Mandūdākī, Vālin seizes her and secures a son named Seri Aṅggada by Mandūdākī, who is later restored to Rāvaṇa at the intercession of Vālin's teacher. As for Hanumān, during his journey to Laṅkā his sperm falls into the sea and it is swallowed by a fish, who later gives birth to a son named Hanūman Tuganggah. Hanūman Tuganggah is first brought up by Rāvaṇa's son Gaṅgga Mahāsura, who rules over the sea, and later he becomes the guardian of the fortress in the kingdom of the Netherworld, ruled by Rāvaṇa's son Pātāla Mahārāyan. Hanumān recognises his son when he visits the Netherworld in order to rescue Rāma from the fortress of Pātāla Mahārāyan. It is also pertinent to note in this connexion that Hanumān does not allow the filial connexion between him and his son to interfere with the duty of his son as the guardian of the fortress. This is evident from his refusal of his son's offer to fetch Rāma, as such a conduct will be treacherous and unworthy of his ancestry. Hanumān also exhorts his son to remain faithful to his master during his lifetime.

On the question of the originality of the innovations concerning the relationships of the major characters as found in *HSR*, it may be of interest to draw attention to the observations made by J. Kats regarding the occurrence of similar motifs in some of the Javanese versions such as the *Serat Rāma Keling*. According to him, the close relationships forged among the chief characters on the basis of odd and unnatural combination of the birth stories of the various characters need not necessarily mean that they were merely invented by the authors of these versions, either because of their ignorance of the original story, or because of their attempt to give a new turn to the story. On the contrary, the tales, which may seem odd and unnatural now, may in fact be reflective of very old manners and customs, and therefore they may well be regarded as more original than the original story itself.[30] Moreover, it may be also pointed out that, though certain elements of the birth-stories such as the king's consorts giving birth to children after partaking of divine food, the wife of a sage committing adultery with divine beings, the transfer of a person's sperm or even embryo of a child to another person, and transformation into animal or human form as a result of plunging into mysterious pools of water, are to be found in some of the literary as well as the folk versions of the Rāma story in India[31] and elsewhere, nevertheless the manner in which the various disparate elements have been moulded into a unified whole is certainly reflective of the distinct originality of the authors, who composed the versions such as *HSR*.

Another characteristic feature, which marks *HSR* as a distinct work is that it has several motifs and episodes, which are not to be found in other versions and which appear in modified form in *HSR*. The following may be mentioned as examples of such motifs and episodes :

(1) Sirancak, who is depicted as the future Rāvaṇa, is pushed into the Underworld by Lord Viṣṇu with his great toe, and Sirancak makes a viol from one of his heads, arms, and three fingers, and plays it in honour of Dewata Mulia Rāya, who allows him to ascend to the earth in order to reincarnate himself as Rāvaṇa.[32]

(2) Rāvaṇa as an ascetic hangs his head downwards over a fire at night for twelve years in Bukit Serendib (Laṅkā) and performs penance.[33]

(3) Allah Subhanahu-wata'ala grants Rāvaṇa a boon, which makes him the ruler of four kingdoms, namely, the Earth, the Keindraan, the Sea and the Netherworld.[34]

(4) Rāvaṇa has three sons named Indrajat (Indrajit), Gaṅgga Mahāsura, and Pātāla Mahārāyan,[35] who are born of Rāvaṇa's first three consorts namely, Nila Utama of the Keindraan, Gaṅgga Mahā Dewī of the Sea, and Pertiwī Dewī of the Netherworld.[36]

(5) Rāvaṇa's younger brother Vibhīṣaṇa is known as Bibūsānam,[37] and he is depicted as an astrologer.

(6) King Daśaratha has also a daughter named Kīkewī Dewī, born of his favourite concubine Balyadari.[38]

(7) Rāma is excluded from succession to the throne of Mandurapuri Negara, because king Daśaratha has promised his favourite concubine Balyadari twice that her son will be the heir to the throne in gratitude for her timely help in averting the danger of the king's palanquin collapsing during a royal procession and later in saving his life by curing him of a malignant boil.

(8) Rāvaṇa's sister Śūrpaṇakhā is known as Śurapandaki.[39]

(9) After Surapandaki's husband named Berga Siṅga[40] is inadvertently killed by Rāvaṇa, Berga Siṅga's son Darsa Siṅga begins to perform a penance in the forest of Indrapawānam[41] in order to obtain a magic sword from

heaven, and his mother Surapandaki visits him every week to supply him with food. One day, Lakṣmaṇa, who happens to be near the bamboo bush, where Darsa Siṅga is performing penance, sees a sword falling from the sky and he catches it. When he tests its edge by cutting the bamboo bush, he kills Darsa Siṅga inadvertently. Surapandaki assumes that Lakṣmaṇa is responsible for her son's death, and she seeks the aid of her relatives to take revenge on Lakṣmaṇa.[42]

(10) At Rāvaṇa's command, two demons named Martanja and Takī assume the forms of a golden and a silver gazelle in order to attract Sītā's attention.

(11) Lakṣmaṇa draws a magic circle around Sītā's hut before he goes in search of Rāma.[43]

(12) When Jaṭāyu falls to the ground after his valiant fight with Rāvaṇa in his attempt to stop him from abducting Sītā, Sītā drops her ring into Jaṭāyu's beak.

(13) When Rāma remains unconscious after learning of Sītā's disappearance, a celestial voice predicts that he will be parted with his wife for twelve years.[44]

(14) Vālin is known as Balya Rāja, and when he and the leader of the buffalo herd are engaged in a duel in a cave, Sugrīwa, who is guarding the mouth of the cave, sees both white and red blood flowing out of the cave and therefore he assumes that both his brother and the buffalo are dead and closes the mouth of the cave.

(15) After Vālin banishes Sugrīva to the forest, Sugrīva becomes an ascetic, and a river springs from the tears shed by him over his misfortune.

(16) At Sugrīva's request, Rāma proves his skill and strength by felling a whole forest of palm trees with his arrow, then by shooting through seven gigantic *nangka*[45] trees growing on the back of a mighty serpent, and finally kicking a mass of skeletons belonging to a demon named Katabihara with his great toe into the sea.

(17) When Rāma shoots an arrow at Vālin from a hidden place, Vālin catches it in his hand, and subsequently when Rāma asks him to return the arrow, Vālin replies

that Lord Viṣṇu's arrow must reach its target, and then he flings the arrow towards the ground. The arrow rises into the air, swerves back, and pierces Vālin to death.[46]

(18) Rāma enlists the help of a monkey king named Sambūrana, in addition to the assistance of Sugrivā and his warriors including Hanumān.

(19) Hanumān is willing to fly to Laṅkā, if he is permitted to eat from the same leaf with Rāma, who complies with the request.

(20) Hanumān jumps from Rāma's arms towards Laṅkā.

(21) After reaching Laṅkā, Hanumān casts Rāma's ring into a pitcher of water, which is meant for Sītā's bath, and when Sītā finds the ring, she calls for Hanumān.[47]

(22) When Hanumān is brought before Rāvaṇa, because he has eaten all the fruits of Rāvaṇa's grove, he extends his tail, coils it, and perches on top, thus sitting higher than Rāvaṇa on his throne.[48]

(23) When the causeway is being built, Rāvaṇa's son Gaṅgga Mahāsura asks the fish in the sea to destroy the causeway. Hanumān whips up the water with his tail and causes the fish to be paralysed. When a mighty crab tries to destroy the causeway, Hanumān tosses it on the land, where it reduces a great forest to a plain by its fall.

(24) Rāvaṇa's younger brother Vibhīṣaṇa defects to Rāma after the building of the causeway.[49]

(25) Rāvaṇa tries to deceive Sītā by showing her the heads of two demons as those of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, whom he claims to have slain in battle, but Vibhīṣaṇa's daughter Dewī Serī Jātī (Trijaṭā) visits Rāma's camp, and on her return she assures Sītā that Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are alive.[50]

(26) There is a forty-day respite in battle after the fall of Rāvaṇa's brother Kumbhakarṇa.[51]

(27) Hanumān plays the role of Rāma's emissary to Rāvaṇa.[52]

(28) Rāvaṇa's son Pātāla Mahārāyan abducts Rāma to the Netherworld, but Rāma is rescued by Hanumān, and Pātāla Mahārāyan is slain by Rāma.[53]

(29) When Indrajita creates a woman resembling Sītā and kills her, Hanumān assumes the form of a bee and flies to Sītā's dwelling to ascertain that she is alive.[54]

(30) Indrajita's arrow changes into floral wreath around Rāma's neck.[55]

(31) After Indrajita is killed by Rāma, his wife Komala Dewī enters the funeral pyre of her husband.

(32) When Lakṣmaṇa is wounded by Rāvaṇa's arrow, Hanumān is sent to fetch the medicinal herbs from the mountain of Anjani and as the herbs can only be ground upon a stone, which is hidden beneath Rāvaṇa's bed, Hanumān goes to fetch the stone as well. During his visit to Rāvaṇa's bed-chamber, Hanumān ties Rāvaṇa's hair to that of his wife, and leaves a note that the knot can only be united when his wife beats him on his head. As Rāvaṇa allows himself to be beaten by a woman, he makes himself liable to defeat.

(33) When Rāma sends Hanumān to Sītā to find out how Rāvaṇa may be killed, she tells Hanumān that, though Rāvaṇa cannot suffer death, he will lose all his strength and power if the little head under his right ear is struck off, for it is the dwelling place of his soul. Accordingly, when Rāma cuts off the little head under Rāvaṇa's ear, Rāvaṇa collapses and Rāma makes his triumphant entry into Laṅkā.

(34) Rāma builds a new city known as Duryapuri Negara and becomes its ruler.

(35) When Sītā is six months pregnant, Kīkewī Dewī persuades her to draw a picture of Rāvaṇa on a fan, and when Sītā is asleep, Kīkewī Dewī places the fan on Sītā's breast. Rāma, on seeing the picture of Rāvaṇa, accuses Sītā of unfaithful conduct and orders her to leave the palace. Sītā goes to live with her adoptive father Mahārisi Kali of Durwatipurwa.[56]

(36) Sītā gives birth to a son named Tablawi (Lava), and Mahārisi Kali creates another boy named Gusi (Kuśa) from a bundle of grass.[57]

(37) Rāma and Sītā are eventually united in marriage again.

(38) Tablawi is married to Indrajita's daughter and he is appointed as the king of Duryapuri Negara.

(39) Gusi is married to Gaṅgga Mahāsura's daughter and he becomes the ruler of Laṅkā.

(40) Vibhīṣaṇa's daughter Sandari Dewī becomes Tablawi's second consort, Hanumān falls in love with her. When Tablawi comes to know of the love-affair, he fights with Hanumān. Rāma stops the fight and chides Hanumān for the offence and reminds him of his origin, so that he may exercise more decorum in the future.

(41) Rāma builds a new city known as Ayodyapuri Negara in the forest, where he goes to live with Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa and Hanumān.

(42) Barādan (Bharata) and Citradan (Satrughna) rule over Mandurapuri Negara and Isfahāboga, respectively.

(43) Rāma and Sītā devote themselves to ascetic life in Ayodyapuri Negara, and after spending forty years of ascetic life, Rāma passes from the transitory world to the world of eternity.

Characterisation in HSR

The chief motive behind *HSR* is to show the ideals of heroism, righteous conduct, love, loyalty, selfless devotion, compassion, and asceticism. Accordingly, these ideals are portrayed through the various facets of human character as reflected in the conduct of the chief characters. First of all, it is noteworthy that, in accordance with the epic character of the story, there is a great deal of emphasis on heroism demonstrated in battles and in various kinds of contests involving skill and strength of the chief characters. The finer human qualities such as brotherly loyalty, wifely devotion, and asceticism are brought out clearly in conjunction with numerous hardships and privations at the time of Rāma s journey in the forest both before and after Rāvaṇa's abduction of Sītā.

Rāma and Hanumān exemplify the heroic qualities of almost superhuman kind. Rāma's greatness is further enhanced by the role he plays as an obedient son, a devoted brother, a loving husband, an able leader of the family as well as the kingdom, and as an ascetic.

Rāma is depicted as an epitome of heroism and righteousness. He is a champion of right and honour. All good forces come to his support. He is always prepared to destroy the evil and wicked elements. At the same time, he shows concern for the wellbeing of his fellow warriors, and he tries to reach an honourable compromise with his foe in an attempt to save them from destruction, but Rāma's initiative for peace is rejected by Rāvaṇa.

Rāma as an obedient son abides by his father's decision to exclude him from succession to the throne of Mandurapuri Negara on account of the king's previous promise to Balyadarī to make her son the heir to the throne. It is noteworthy that Bharata continues to rule over Mandurapuri Negara even after Rāma's conquest of Rāvaṇa, and indeed Rāma builds new cities for his son Tablawi and for himself instead of returning to his father's kingdom.

The brotherly loyalty and devotion between Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa is evident from the fact that they never part with each other from birth to death. Lakṣmaṇa's selfless devotion to his brother has given rise to the general conception that he is an ascetic.

Rāma's effective role as the head of the family may be seen in the performance of his duties in connexion with the arrangement of marriage relationships between the members of his family and those of his erstwhile foe and also in establishing new cities for his son and his followers. Rāma as an ideal monarch of a righteous government also instructs his sons in the art of a just, humane and firm administration.

Rāma's inclination towards asceticism is seen not only at the time of his journeys in the forest, but also after his conquest of Rāvaṇa. In the final stage of his career, he leaves the worldly and mundane duties of ruling the kingdom to his son Tablawi and devotes himself to asceticism for forty years.

As regards Sītā's character, she is depicted as one whose purity and honour are not to be questioned or doubted by anyone, and she exemplifies unwavering loyalty and steadfastness especially in times of hardship and even in the face of Rāvaṇa's intimidation and trickery.

Hanumān as a great warrior would sometimes seem to play a greater heroic role than Rāma himself. However, his heroic and noble character is somewhat tarnished by the incident of his adultery with Tablawi's second consort, but eventually he is forgiven by Rāma and Tablawi.

Vibhīṣaṇa, the younger brother of Rāvaṇa, is a supporter of truth and honour, and he provides a foil to the unrighteous deeds of his unreasoning brother.

Rāvaṇa's son Indrajita would seem to be caught in a conflicting human situation in which he has the courage to speak for the rightful course of action when he pleads with his father to release Sītā, but at the same time he chooses to remain loyal to his father till his death.

Rāvaṇa represents evil, and his defeat is the conquest of evil by righteousness.

To sum up now, it would seem evident from the above discussion that the Rāma story in the Malay folk and literary traditions has assumed distinct forms incorporating both localised elements and popular elements from oral sources reaching the Malay archipelago and peninsular from the different parts of the Indian subcontinent, and that it is a highly developed and well-balanced account containing many innovations, modifications, and embellishments in regard to motifs, episodes, and characterisation.

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[1] Mohd Taib Osman, 'Rāmāyaṇa dalam kebudayaan Melayu,' *Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, 1971), p. 29.

[2] Mohd Taib Osman, *Kesusasteraan Mélayu Lama* (Kuala Lumpur : Federal Publications Sendirian Berhad, 1974), p. 34.

[3] 'Sejarah Melayu, Raffles ms., edited by R. O. Winstedt,' *JMBRAS.*, Vol. 16, pt. 3 (1938), p 104 ; *Sejarah Melayu, or Malay Annals*, translated by C. C. Brown (Kuala Lumpur : Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 67 ; *Sejarah Mēlayu*, diusahakan oleh W. G. Shellabear (Kuala Lumpur : Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 112.

[4] 'Sejarah Melayu, Raffles ms., edited by R. O. Winstedt,' *JMBRAS.*, Vol. 16, pt. 3 (1938), p. 113 ; *Sĕjarah Mēlayu, or Malay Annals*, translated by C. C. Brown (Kuala Lumpur, 1970), p. 77 ; *Sējarah Mēlayu*, diusahakan oleh W. G. Shellabear (Kuala Lumpur, 1967), pp. 113 and 132.

[5] 'Sejarah Melayu, Raffles ms., edited by R. O. Winstedt,' *JMBRAS*, Vol. 16, pt. 3 (1938), p. 114.

[6] A. Zieseniss, ' Funktion und Stellung des Laksamāna am Hofe der Malaiischen Sultane,' *Acta Oriēntalia*, Vol. XV (1937), pp. 72-75 ; C. Hooykaas, ' Laks(a)māna at Malay courts,' *JOIB.*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (September 1956), pp. 1-2.

[7] *Hikayat Hang Tuah* (menurut naskhah Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka), diselenggarakan oleh Kassim Ahmad (Kuala Lumpur : Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1968), p. 135 ; *Hikajat Hang Toeah* (Weltevreden : Balai Poestaka, 1930), Jilid, I, p. 140.

[8] Cf. Sir Richard Winstedt, *A History of Classical Malay Literature* (Kuala Lumpur : Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 37-38 ; A. Zieseniss, *The Rāma Saga in Malaysia, its origin and development*, translated by P. W. Burch (Singapore : Malaysian Sociological Research Institute Ltd., 1903), pp. 187-188.

[9] *Geschiedenis van Śrī Rāma*, beroemd Indisch Heroisch Dichstuk, oorspronkelijk van Valmic en naar eene Maleische vertaling daarvan in het Maleisch met Arabisch karakter, mitsgaders met eene voorrede en plaat uitgegeven, door en voor rekening van P. P. Roorda van Eysinga (Amsterdam : L. van Bakkenes, 1843), 173 pp. See also a romanised and simplified version of this work, entitled *Hikajat Seri Rama*, first published by Balai Poestaka at Batavia in 1938 (256 pp.).

[10] ' Hikayat Serī Rāma, edited by Rev. W. G. Shellabear,' *JSBRAS.*, No. 71 (December, 1915), pp. 1-285. See also *Hikayat Serī Rāma*, edited by Rev. W. G. Shellabear, Rumi version prepared by Wahi bin Long (Singapore : Malaysia Publishing House Ltd., 1964), 298 pp. The manuscript containing this recension of *HSR* happens to be the oldest extant manuscript, and it was given to the Bodleian Library of the Oxford University by Archbishop Laud in 1633. It is, however, believed that the *HSR* recension contained in the Bodleian, or Shellabear text is the youngest of all the known *HSR* recensions. See W. G. Shellabear, ' An Account of some of the oldest Malay MSS., now extant,' *JSBRAS.*, No. 31 (1898), pp. 113 and 143-151 ; Sir Richard Winstedt, *A History of Classical Malay Literature* (Kuala Lumpur : Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 39 and 45-46.

[11] Gerth van Wijk, ' Iets over verschillende Maleische redacties van den Serī Rāma,' *TBG.*, Vol. XXXIV (1891), pp. 401-433 ; H. H. Juynboll, *Catalogus van de Maleische en Sundaneesche handscriften der Leidsche Universiteits Bibliotheek* (Leiden, 1899), p. 47 et seq. ; H. Overbeck, ' Hikayat Maharaja Rawāna,' *JMBRAS.*, Vol. XI, pt. 2 (1933), pp. 111-132 ; R. O. Windstedt, ' An Undescribed Malay version of the Rāmāyaṇa,' *JRAS* (1944), pp. 62-73 ; E. C. G. Barrett, ' Further light on Sir Richard Winstedt's " Undescribed Malay version of the Rāmāyaṇa ",' *BSOAS.*, Vol. XXVI, pt. 3 (1963), pp. 531-543.

[12] Cf. R. O. Winstedt, ' An Undescribed Malay version of the Rāmāyaṇa,' *JRAS* (1944), p. 66.

[13] See also Ph. S. van Ronkel, ' The Rāmāyaṇa in Malay,' *Acta Orienta lia* Vol. VII (1929), pp. 319-324.

[14] A. Dozon, ' Sur le roman Malay de Śrī Rāma,' *JA.*, iveme série, Vol. VII (1846), pp. 425-471.

[15] H. H. Juynboll, ' Eene episode uit het Oudindische Rāmāyaṇa vergeleken met de Javaansche en Maleische bewerkingen,' *BKI.*, Vol. 50 (1899), p. 66.

[16] PH. S. van Ronkel, ' Aanteekeningen op een ouden Maleischen Rāmājanatekst,' *BKI.*, Vol. 75 (1919), pp. 379-383.

[17] W. H. Rassers, *De Pandji-roman* (Antwerpen : de Vos & Van Kleef, 1922) pp. 238-292.

[18] W. F. Stutterheim, *Rāma-Legenden und Rāma-Reliefs in Indonesien* (Munchen : G. Muller, 1925), pp. 21-63.

[19] A. Zieseniss, *Die Rāma-sage bei den Malaien, ihre Herkunft und Gestaltung* (Hamburg : Gruyter and Co., 1928) ; *The Rāma Saga in Malaysia, its origin and development*, translated by P. W. Burch (Singapore : Malaysian Sociological Research Institute Ltd., 1963), pp. 179-188.

[20] *VR.*, VII, 2-34 ; *RV(HPS).*, III, pp. 377-490.

[21] Of the various recensions of *HSR* dealing with the birth and the antecedents of Rāvaṇa, the Raffles manuscript No. 22, belonging to the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society in London, and the Wilkinson manuscript No. Add. 3756, belonging to the Cambridge University Library, would seem to contain fuller versions of the tale than the other recensions. See R. O. Winstedt, 'An Undescribed Malay version of the Rāmāyaṇa,' *JRAS* (1944), pp. 62-73 ; E. C. G, Barrett, 'Further Light on Sir Richard Winstedt's "Undescribed Malay version. of the Rāmāyaṇa",' *BSOAS.*, Vol. XXVI, pt. 3 (1963), pp. 531-543.

[22] The manuscript containing this recension belongs to the Preussische Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, and it is found to be more or less identical with the Leiden manuscript, of which H. H. Juynboll has given a short description in his catalogue. See H. Overbeck, 'Hikayat Maharaja Rāvaṇa,' *JMBRAS.*, Vol. XI, pt. 2 (1933), pp. 111-132 ; H. H. Juynboll, *Catalogus van de Maleische en Sundaneesche handschriften der Leidsche Universiteits Bibliotheek* (Leiden, 1899), p. 47.

[23] Cf. The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, III, xvi, 7-12 ; VII, i, 35-46.

[24] *Hikayat Seri Rāma*, edited by Rev. W. G. Shellabear, Rumi version prepared by Wahi bin Long (Singapore : Malaysia Publishing House Ltd., 1964), pp. 1-3 and 56.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[26] Cf. *KR.*, I, 20 : 36 ; II, 6 : 1 ; IV, 3 : 17.

[27] *HSR.*, *RO.*, 11-12 and 23 ; cf. also *HSR* (*Rf.*)., 65-66, 133 ff. ; E. C. G. Barrett, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-543.

[28] The motif of Sītā being Rāma's sister and queen-consort is also to be found in the Buddhist *Daśaratha-Jātaka.* See *Dasaratha-Jātaka, the Buddhist story of King Rama*, edited and translated by V. Fausboll (Copenhagen : Hagerup, 1871).

[29] In the Shellabear text, Rāma and Sītā are changed into monkeys as a result of bathing in a forbidden pool of clear water, and after they have disported themselves, they are thrown by Lakṣmaṇa into another pool of muddy water and then they assume human form. Later, Rāma's sperm is transferred from Sītā's body into the mouth of Dewī Anjātī by the wind-god.

[30] J. Kats, 'The Rāmāyaṇa in Indonesia,' *BSOAS.*, Vol. IV, pt. 3 (1926-1928), p. 582.

[31] Cf. *VR.*, I, 16 ; *KR.*, I, 5 : 86-106, *KKII.*, I, 5 : 88-108 ; *VR.*, I, 48 ; *KR.* I, 9 : 74-81 ; *IR*(*OU*)., 11 : 43, pp. 921-920. V. Raghavan, *The Greater Rāmāyaṇa* (Varanasi, 1973), p. 87.

[32] Cf. *HSR* (*WIL*)., 13; also E. C. G. Barrett, 'Further light on Sir Richard Winstedt's "Undescribed Malay version of the Rāmāyaṇa",' *BSOAS.*, Vol XXVI, pt. 3 (1963), p. 537. According to the Tamil *Uttarakāṇṭam* and the Tamil *Tēvāram* verses of the saint Tirunāvukkaṛacar, (Appar), when Rāvaṇa tries to uproot the mountain of Kailāsa, Lord Śiva presses the mountain with his great toe and crushes Rāvaṇa's arms, and Rāvaṇa then makes a lute from one of his heads and one of his arms, and sings the *Sāma-Veda* to the accompaniment of the lute in praise of Lord Śiva for a thousand years. Lord Śiva, who is impressed by Rāvaṇa's devotion, releases him from the pressure of his great toe on the mountain and confers upon him a magic sword known as *Candrahāsa* and a boon of long life to rule over the Three Worlds. *See IR*(*OU*)., 68-75 ; *Tēvāram*, IV, 28 : 10 ; IV, 34 : 10. It may be also noted in this connexion that several of the *Wayang Siam* versions in Malaysia have the motif of Sirancak making a voil with his skull, one arm, three fingers, tendons, and hair, and playing it to Dewata Mulia Rāya for twelve years. P. L. Amin Sweeney, *The Rāmāyaṇa and the Malay Shadow-Play* (Kuala Lumpur, 1972), pp. 138, 154, and 217.

[33] According to a South Indian folk tradition, Rāvaṇa performs penance in Gokarṇa for ten thousand years between five fires with his feet suspended in the air. B. Ziegenbalg, *Genealogie der Malabarischen Götter* (Madras, 1867), p. 187 ; A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

[34] The Hindu versions of the Rāma story generally refer to Rāvaṇa's sovereignty extending to the Three Worlds, namely, The Earth, the Heaven, and the Netherworld. Cf. *IR*(*OU*)., 7 : 75.

[35] The name *Pātāla Mahārāyan* is derived from the term *pātāla* (' the nether region ') and the word *mahārāyan*, which is a Tamil form for the Sanskrit word *mahārāja* (' supreme king ').

[36] The names of Rāvaṇa's consorts Nila Utama, Gaṅgga Mahā Dewī, and Pirtiwī Dewī are apparently derived from such names as Tilottamā (name of a celestial damsel), Gaṅgā (the river Ganges, personified as a goddess), and Pṛthvī (the goddess of the Earth). Cf. A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

[37] The name-form *Bibūsānam* seems to be a Tamil name-form for the Sanskrit word *Bibūṣaṇa* or *Vibūṣaṇa*, meaning ' the adorning one '.

[38] According to the sixteenth century Bengali version of Candrāvatī, king Daśaratha has also a daughter named *Kukua*, born of his second consort Kaikeyī. D. Sen, *The Bengali Ramayanas* (Calcutta, 1920), pp. 196-197.

[39] The name-form *Surapandaki* is probably connected with the Tamil colloquial name-form *Cūrppanaki* for the Sanskrit name *Śūrpaṇakhā*. Cf. *Tamil Lexicon* Vol. III, pt. 1 (Madras, 1928), p. 1565.

[40] The name-form *Berga Siṅga* seems to be related to the Tamil name-form *Vitturiciṅkan* or *Vitturuciṅku* for the Sanskrit name *Vidyujjihva*. Cf. *IR*(*OU*)., 6 : 56, pp. 340-342.

[41] The name-form *Indrapawānam* appears to be a Tamil name-form for the Sanskrit word *Indra-Bhavan* (' Indra's abode '), but it may also have been a misconstrued form for the word *Taṇṭakāvanam* in Tamil, which refers to the Daṇḍaka forest where Rāma and his companions take up their residence before Sītā is abducted by Rāvaṇa.

[42] In Vimala Sūri's Jaina version entitled *Paumacariya*, Śambūka, who is said to be the son of Candranakhā (Śūrpaṇakhā), practises asceticism in a bamboo thicket in order to acquire the divine sword *Sūryahāsa*. When the sword descends from heaven, Laksman finds it, and trying out the weapon in the bamboo thicket, he inadvertently slays Sambūka. Candranakhā finds the body of her son and then goes in search of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, suspecting them of perpetrating the deed. See also A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

[43] According to the *Tattvasamgraharāmāyaṇa* (III, 15), composed in Sanskrit by Rāma Brahmānanda in the eighteenth century A.D., Lakṣmaṇa draws a safety line around Sītā, and when she steps out of the circle in response to Rāvaṇa's request to read her palm, he abducts her. V. Raghavan, ' The Tattvasamgraharāmāyaṇa of Rāma Brahmānanda,' *Annals Oriental Research, University of Madras*, Vol. X (1952-1953), p. 28

[44] According to the Hindu versions such as the Sanskrit epic of Vālmīki, the period of Rāma's exile is fourteen years. The twelve-year period of Rāma's parting with his wife in *HSR* is probably related to the motif of Rāma's absence from the capital for a twelve-year period to be found in the Buddhist *Dasaratha-Jātaka*.

[45] *Artocarpus heterophylus*. According to *VR* (IV, 11), Rāma demonstrates his strength by pushing away the heap of skeleton belonging to a buffalo-demon named Dundubhi with a single kick of his great toe, and by shooting through seven *sāla shorea robusta*) trees as well as the mountain and the earth with a single arrow, which finally returns to his quiver.

[46] According to *KR* (IV, 7 : 57, 67, 71 and 153), after Rāma's arrow pierces Vālin's chest, he pulls it from his chest, finds that Rāma's name is engraved on it, and begins to accuse Rāma of attacking him from his hiding place, and finally as Vālin's grip on the arrow is relaxed at the point of death, the arrow pierces right through Vālin's body, dips itself in the pure waters of the sea, and returns to Rāma's quiver.

[47] In *VR* (V, 36) and *KR* (V, 5 : 63), Hanumān himself shows Rāma's ring to Sītā as a token of his identity.

[48] In the Bengali version entitled *Aṅgader Raivara*, composed by Kavicandra in the eighteenth century, Rāma's envoy Angada elongates his tail, rolls it up

and sits on it, so as to be on the same level as Rāvaṇa. D. Sen, *The Bengali Rāmāyaṇas* (Calcutta, 1920), pp. 218-219.

[49] In *VR* and *YR*, Vibhīsaṇa seeks refuge with Rāma even before the building of the causeway.

[50] In *VR* (VI, 31) at the command of Rāvaṇa, a demon named Vidyujjihva creates an illusion of Rāma's head and his bow before Sītā, and she is console by Vibhiīsaṇa's wife Sarama.

[51] It is customary to observe a forty-day mourning for the death of a prince, who is also the heir-apparent to the throne in Malay kingdoms. See A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, p. 139 ; Alwi bin Sheikh Alhady, *Malay Customs and Traditions* (Singapore : Donald Moore for Eastern University Press Ltd., 1962), p. 117.

[52] In *VR* (VI, 41) and *KR* (VI, 13 : 8-43), Vqlin's son Angada plays the role of Rāma's emissary to Ravana.

[53] According to the Bengali version entitled *Mahi Rāvaner Pāla*, composed by Kṛttivāsa in the fifteenth century A.D., Rāvaṇa's son Mahi abducts Rāma and Laksmaṇa with the intention of sacrificing, them to the goddess Kāli. Hanumān assumes the form of a fly, enters Mahi's palace, slays the demon and rescues Rāma. D. Sen, *The Bengali Rāmāyaṇas* (Calcutta, 1920), pp. 254-283.

[54] In *KR* (VI, 25 : 92), Vibhīsaṇa assumes the form of a bee and ascertains that Sīta is alove.

[55] According to the *Lalitavistara*, the weapon hurled against the Bodhisattva by Mara's army change into festoons of flowers hovering above his head. Cf. A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

[56] In the Bengali version of Candrāvatī, Sītā draws the picture of Rāvana on a fan at the request of Kaikeyī's daughter Kukuā, and when Sīta is asleep, Kukuā places the fan on Sītā's breast and makes a malicious report to Rāma that Sīta is constantly thinking about Rāvaṇa. As a result of this incident, Sīta is banished to the forest. D. Sen, *The Bengali Rāmāyaṇas* (Calcutta, 1920), pp. 196-200.

[57] Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* (IX, *taranga* 51, verses 86-93) refers to Kusa being created by the sage Vālmīki from the *kusa* (*Poa cynosuroides*) grass after Sita has already given birth to Lava. *The Ocean of Story, being C. H. Tawney's translation of Somadeva's Kathāsaritsāgara*, edited by N. M. Penzer (Reprint, Delhi, 1968), Vol. IV, p. 128.

ABBREVIATIONS

BKI	*Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsche-Indie*, 's-Gravenhage (The Hague).
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, London.
HSR	*Hikayat Serī Rāma.*
HSR (*Raf.*)	*Hikayat Serī Rāma*, Raffles Malay Manuscript No. 22, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.
HSR., RO.	*Geschiedenis van Srī Rāma*, beroemd Indische Heroisch Dichtstuk, oorspronkelijk van Valmic en naar eene Maleische vertaling daarvan in het Maliesch met Arabisch karakter, mitsgaders met eene Voorrede en plaat uitgegeven, door en voor rekening van P. P. Roorda van Eysinga. Amsterdam: Bij. L. van Bakkenes, 1843.

HSR., SH.	'Hikayat Serī Rāma, edited by W. G. Shellabear,' *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 71 (December, 1915), pp. 1-285.
HSR (Wil).	*Hikayat Serī Rāma*, Wilkinson Malay Manuscript, Cambridge University Add. 3756.
IR (OU).	*Irāmāyaṇam. Ottakkūttar iyarriya uttarakāntam*, Annamalainagar : Annamalai University, 1977.
JA	*Journal Asiatique*, Paris.
JMBRAS	*Journal of the Malayan (Malaysian) Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.
JOIB	*Journal of the Oriental Institute*, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Baroda.
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, London.
JSBRAS	*Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Singapore.
KKII	*Kaviccakaravartti Kambar iyarriya Irāmāyanam*, edited by R. P. Cetupillai and others. Annamalainagar : Annamalai University, 1957-1970.
KR	*Kambarāmāyanam*, edited with the commentary by V. M. Kopalakirushnamacariyar, Madras, 1959.
RV(HPS)	*The Rāmāyaṇa of Valmiki*, translated into English by Hari Prasad Shahstri. 3 Vols. London : Shanti Sadan, 1952-1959.
TBG	*Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, Batavia and 's-Gravenhage.
VR	*The Vālmīki-Rāmāyaṇa*, critically edited for the first time by G. H. Bhatt and others. 7 Volumes. Baroda : Oriental Institute, M.S. University of Baroda, 1960-1971.

RAMAYANA BRANCH STORIES IN THE WAYANG_SIAM SHADOW PLAY IN MALAYSIA

GHULAM-SARWAR YOUSOF

THE Shadow Play theatre, using intricately carved two dimensional skin puppets, is known in various styles between Morocco on the one hand and China and Bali on the other. Its greatest concentration, however, is in South-east Asia where it exists in at least two general varieties, one using large, composite puppets of the Thai *Nang Talung* type, and the other utilising smaller, single-character puppets.

In Malaysia, four distinctive types of single-character shadow puppet-theatre styles are found : the *Wayang Gedek*, the *Wayang Purwa*, the *Wayang Melayu*, and the *Wayang Siam*. The *Wayang Gedek* is the southern Thai *Nang Talung*, which uses delicate, almost flimsy puppets carved *en face* and a repertoire derived largely from Thai folk literature. Occasionally the *Ramayana*, again in its Thai versions, gets used in Kedah, where the *Wayang Gedek* has its principal Malaysian base, while the basic performance style of the *Nang Talung* is detained, the language has been modified, so that the Kedah dialect of Malay is interspersed with the southern Thai dialect. The *Wayang Purwa*, which came into Malaysia from Java, uses very elegantly carved puppets to perform stories from the *Mahabharata* in a repertoire derived from Old Javanese literary versions of that epic. A few dalangs of the *Wayang Purwa*, mainly immigrants from Indonesia their immediate descendants, continue to maintain *Wayang Purwa* in the southern state of Johore on the Malay peninsula. The Johore *Wayang Purwa* is now beginning to use the Malay language instead of Javanese. The majority of *Wayang Purwa* dalangs, however, continue to use Javanese or even Kawi. A variation of the *Wayang Purwa* is the *Wayang Melayu*, found in Kelantan and Trengganu on the east coast of the

Malay peninsula, and performing with a much-reduced gamelan orchestra. Other innovations include the use of the Kelantanese dialect of Malay and of the Javanese Panji cycle of stories in addition to *Wayang Purwa's* traditional *Mahabharata* repertoire. There are very few groups currently performing *Wayang Melayu* which is virtually on the verge of extinction.

The *Wayang Siam*, our principal concern here, is a much more active and widely-distributed style found in Kelantan, Trengganu, Pahang and also in Patani, southern Thailand. Kelantan, however, is its principal base where dozens of *dalangs* are still active. The language used is the Kelantanese-Patani dialect of Malay. The principal *Wayang Siam* story is the *Hikayat Maharaja Wana*, one of the two major literary versions of the *Ramayana*, the other being the *Hikayat Seri Rama*.

Repertoire

In Kelantan the basic repertoire of the *Ramayana* is divided by *Wayang Siam dalangs* into what is known as the main or trunk stories (*cerita-cerita pokok*) and the branch or twig stories (*cerita-cerita ranting*). The *cerita-cerita pokok* deal with the basic *Ramayana* story as it appears in the *Hikayat Maharaja Wana* and the *Cerita Kusi Serawi*. These stories are, therefore, more or less parallel to other Indian, South-east Asian and Malay Rama sagas with certain variations, additions and localisations which lend each of the regional versions a distinctive character of its own.

The word *ranting* is used to designate a whole mass of tales that, although part of the Rama repertoire are not found in the basic *Ramayana* story. The term *ranting* indicates that such stories are not intended to be a part of the main or trunk story. Generally they consist of the later or minor adventures of Seri Rama and other major *Ramayana* characters, as well as their offspring. In chronological terms, therefore, the *ranting* stories begin after the death of Rawana and Seri Rama's successful rescue of Sita Dewi from Langkapuri.

The *ranting* stories do not, as a whole, constitute a ' cycle ' as such, or even a complete story as does the epic. The stories do not form a series in chronological or even logical or thematic sequence ; each is a single, complete and independent unit. A certain number of *ranting* stories are common to several *dalangs* and invented as they were, several generations ago, have now become part of the basis repertoire of the *dalangs* through a process of oral transmission. In many cases motifs are interchanged between stories, either new or traditional, not only from the Rama cycle, but also from stories derived from other sources such as the Javanese Panji romance, as well as stories from other traditional genres such as *Mak Yong*, *Menora* and *Selampit*. The larger number of *ranting* tales are completely fluid and flexible in content. In many cases, therefore, such interchange of motifs is achieved without too much difficulty, or any feeling of incongruity.

Today a large number of *ranting* stories have actually been in existence for several generations and have been handed down in this form. Therefore, although only fanciful creations, they have been completely accepted as a part of the ' fundamental ' *Wayang Siam* repertoire. On the other hand there are *dalangs* who to this day continue to create new adventures for the heroes of the *Ramayana*, thus further developing and enlarging the *ranting* repertoire.

The exact number of *ranting* stories is not known, as the process of collection and documentation has only recently started. For now the following dozen or so stories recently collected by the present writer will form the basis of the present discussion :

Cerita Pak Dogol
Dewa Pentuga Luga or Ular Kekek
Gerga Singa
Hajal Sri Betara Nala
Hanuman Bongsu
Hanuman Layang Putih
Jintan Mas Indera Bayu Rupa
Kerak Nasi
Kera Manja
Raden Kelana Tiga
Raja Seri Rama Daki Semai

Themes and Motifs

Several important themes or motifs repeatedly make their appearance in the *Ramayana ranting* stories of the *Wayang Kulit Siam* some exactly parallel to those found in the Panji cycle, and indeed some which are the stock-in-trade of romances or folk tales all over the world. These recurrent motifs include the following :

1. Seri Rama's several marriages, contracted for various reasons including victories in wars or as well as his plain desire for pretty women whom he cannot resist. Sometimes such marriages are inevitable as they are a precondition to the obtaining of a favour Seri Rama badly needs. In most cases the princesses he marries are left behind. Sometimes they hear him children who later seek him out. An ultimate reconciliation generally takes place between Seri Rama and his wives and children.
2. The marriages of other characters, including Hanuman Kera Putih, Seri Rama's other sons and his grandsons. The pattern here usually parallels that of Seri Rama's own marriages. Often competitions or tests for the hands of princesses are involved.
3. The expulsion of a deity from the Sky-country, Kayangan, and his transformation into some other form, usually awaiting a retransformation into his original shape through a meeting with Seri Rama. Often, to thus bring about an encounter with Seri Rama, the condemned deity has to commit a second or even a third crime which leads to battles between him and various lesser characters before a final battle brings him face to face with Seri Rama. Such evil acts as are commited by the condemned deity include kidnappings of women, sometimes that of Sita Dewi herself, or invasions. In the final battle of Seri Rama's attempt to 'kill' the transformed deity is usually instrumental in his retransformation into his original form.
4. The kidnapping of Sita Dewi and her eventual recovery by Seri Rama through assistance provided by others including Lakshmana, Hanuman and Pak Dogol. The events in such stories sometimes parallel the main *Ramayana* story.

5. Seri Rama's constant disappearance from his own kingdom either in search of love or adventure, and Sita Dewi's search for him. In the more dramatic situations Sita Dewi, in male disguise, is brought face to face with Seri Rama in a war. Such a war generally leads to the discovery of Sita Dewi's true identity and her reconciliation with Seri Rama.
6. Separation and reconciliation. Various characters including Lakshmana, Hanuman Kera Putih, Pak Dogol and Wak Long, get banished by Seri Rama from Siusia Mendarapura for various 'misdeeds'. Apart from banishment or self-exile, separation is occasionally brought about by kidnapping, as in the case of Sita Dewi (No. 4 above). In all instances, final reconciliation comes about through various devices including battles which the banishes are obliged to fight against Seri Rama or on his behalf when, desperate for their help and profoundly regretting his hasty decision to banish them, he seeks them out. Some of the situations leading to battles preceding reconciliation include visits to the sky-country, Kayangan, to seeks divine assistance or intervention. In such cases the stories end with elaborate *deux-ex-machina*.
7. The kidnapping of various princesses, generally the fiancees of other Maharajas or princes, by members of Seri Rama's family. Such thefts invariably lead to invasions of Seri Rama's territories and the defeat of the invading forces or, alternatively, peace agreements. In the latter instance the kidnapped princesses are returned to their affianced princes.
8. Invasions inspired by the desire for revenge or territorial designs. Generally the invading forces are defeated with the assistance provided by Seri Rama.

The motifs listed here cover most eventualities though they are by no means exhaustive. At the same time it is obvious that a measure of overlap is inevitable as a consequence of several motifs being found together in a single story. We shall now illustrate these motifs using selected examples from the *Ramayana* ranting repertoire.

1. Seri Rama's Marriages

In *Raja Seri Rama Daki Semai*, an extremely important *ranting*, Seri Rama neglects Sita Dewi because he is in love with Puteri Jintan Berembun of the country of Gong Gendang. When Sita Dewi learns of this, she makes a general 'ruling' as regards Seri Rama's many love affairs and marriages. She allows her husband to marry again (and again) provided that he does not steal someone else's wife or fiancee. Seri Rama promptly goes to Gong Gendang to try to win Puteri Jintan Berembun. The same princess, as is quite normal in such circumstances, is also being sought by others, including Maharaja Ratu Pahlawan of Alam Lingkongan. There are, however, two conditions that must be fulfilled before any marriage with Puteri Jintan Berembun can take place. First, any seeker of the princess' hand must undergo a test of physical strength in a tussle with her. The princess is reputed to have considerable knowledge of witchcraft and is able to transform herself into various shapes. Second, the seeker must undergo a similar test against a bull, Geliga Sakti Lembu Jantan. The princess, in the shape, of a dragon (*naga*) meets the challengers. Seri Rama passes this first test of strength while other princess fail. He is, however, unable to pass the second test and appeals to Pak Dogol for assistance. Pak Dogol, being Dewa Si Alam Tunggal (or Sang Yang Tunggal), understands the mystery of Gyliga Sakti Lembu Jantan. It can only be killed by Seri Rama Daki Semai, an 'imitation' Seri Rama created from the body-dirt (*daki*) of Dewa Si Alam Tunggal. Raja Seri Rama Daki Semai, on being thus created by Pak Dogol, overcomes Geliga Sakti Lembu Jantan. Seri Rama then marries not only Puteri Jintan Berembun but also her two sisters, Puteri Jintan Ayu and Puteri Jintan Bongsu. This leads him into further trouble, as such a marriage is a violation of the *adat* or code of ethics and moral behaviour established by the gods. Betara Guru, upon receiving a complaint to this effect from the defeated and jealous Ratu Pahlawan, arrests Seri Rama and chains him in the Kayangan. Pak Dogol, however, once again transforming himself into Dewa Si Alam Tunggal, a god superior even to Betara Guru, persuades the captor to release Seri Rama who is then brought back to earth. Seri Rama decides upon his return that he does not want any of his three newly acquired wives.

Neither does he want to return yet to Siusia Mendarapura. He goes to meditate at Gunung Payung Berapi and to seek forgiveness from the gods.

In Gerga Singa we have a situation where Seri Rama is compelled to marry an ugly, misshapen woman, Dewi Dewa Dani, so that he can obtain the flower, Bunga Anggrik Dani, to heal Sita Dewi's intolerably painful eye infection. When Seri Rama and his companions, Hanuman, Pak Dogol and Wak Long, arrive at the mountain cave of Dewi Dewa Dani to obtain the flower after having killed the guardian ogre of the mountain, Jin Soba Gelang, Dewi Dewa Dani insists that Seri Rama must spend three nights with her in exchange for the flower, and also return the flower once Sita Dewi's eyes are healed. Seri Rama is repulsed by her ugliness, but has little choice in the matter. After consulting Pak Dogol he agrees to her terms. The result of this tryst is a son, Gerga Singa, who, upon reaching maturity, goes looking for his father who has failed to show up again once he has obtained the flower from Dewi Dewa Dani. Like his mother, Gerga Singa is also misshapen. Initially, upon seeing him Seri Rama rejects him as he also rejects Dewi Dewa Dani when she accompanies her son to Seri Rama's palace on a second attempt at reconciliation with him. When Dewi Dewa Dani threatens to repossess the flower, thus hanging the threat of possible blindness over Sita Dewi's head, Seri Rama acknowledges Dewi Dewa Dani as his wife and Gerga Singa as his son. It is then learnt that their ugliness is merely a disguise. Dewi Dewa Dani is in fact an extremely beautiful princess, Puteri Mahabiru, and Gerga Singa a handsome prince. The necessary transformations take place and both Puteri Mahabiru and Gerga Singa, now renamed Raden Pentala Dani, stay with Seri Rama.

In *Indera Dewa*, Seri Rama takes a decision to kidnap the beautiful Puteri Bijak Laksana from the kingdom of Kota Ledang. She is engaged to Raja Dewa Indera. Upon arrival in Kota Ledang, Seri Rama is transformed by Pak Dogol into a snake and in this shape he enters the palace of Puteri Bijak Laksana placing himself in the kitchen where food is being prepared for the wedding of Puteri Bijak Laksana and Dewa Indera. Here he bites the princess who promptly becomes unconscious. Seri Rama rejoins Pak Dogol. All attempts to restore consciousness to Puteri Bijak

Laksana fail and the search is still on for a *bomoh* or *dukun* who can heal her. Pak Dogol, now disguising himself as a *dukun*, enters the palace with Seri Rama transformed into a small boy, the 'grandson' of the dukun. Pak Dogol revives the princess. Puteri Bijak Laksana is attracted to the 'boy' Seri Rama and decides to adopt him. Pak Dogol's and Seri Rama's scheme has thus worked.

During the night Seri Rama transforms himself into his normal self and sleeps with the princess. She's horrified upon thus discovering him, but is all the same extremely attracted to him. She wants him to stay with her. Several months later Dewa Indera discovers the relationship of Seri Rama and Puteri Bijak Laksana. In the ensuing battle, Seri Rama and Pak Dogol are both captured. Seri Rama is hanged up side down and Pak Dogol is buried alive. Later on Hanuman saves Seri Rama while Wak Long discovers Pak Dogol. No one is able to win the final battle between Seri Rama and Dewa Indera. Seri Rama calls for assistance from his father, Sirat Maharaja but as Sirat Maharaja and Dewa Indera's father are old friends, they will not have their sons at war with each other. Thus peace is made and Seri Rama surrenders Puteri Bijak Laksana to Dewa Indera.

2. The Marriages of other Characters

Much as does Seri Rama, some of the other characters in the *ranting* stories indulge in kidnappings and competitions for the hands of beautiful princesses. Thus in *Kera Manja*, Raden Lak Juna, one of Seri Rama's sons, takes part in a competition for the hand of Puteri Kencana Mayang Mas, the adopted daughter of Jin Armin Shah, defeating his other major competitor, Mambang Pari. In the same story an ideal or 'destined' bride (*jodol*) is being sought for Raden Lak Juna's brother, Raden Lak Palembang. Here the choice is Puteri Bongsu, the youngest of seven sky princesses who occasionally descend to the earth to play at the Banjaran Sari Garden. On one occasion when three of these princesses descend to their favourite picnic spot they are seen by Lak Juna and Lak Palembang. The princes turn themselves in goldfish and are taken up to Kayangan by the eldest and youngest sky-pincesses, Puteri Tua and Puteri Bongsu. After several further adventures Lak Palembang marries Puteri Bongsu.

Similarly, in another story, *Dewa Pentuga Luga*, Rama Ranjuna, another son of Seri Rama, wins a competition by uprooting a magical burning tree guarded by three monsters, a white elephant named Gajah Putih Gading Sembilan, a dragon, Naga Semerak Api and an ogre, Jin Semberona. The tree gives off unbearable heat which is destroying the kingdom. Rama Ranjuna uses his magic arrow, Panah Gading Sauka Rokol, to neutralise the heat of the tree which he then pulls out. The tree turns into a princess, Puteri Cermata Mutiara, who had earlier been cursed and through the curse turned into a tree with a prediction that her husband-to-be will release her and restore her human shape. She thus becomes the wife of Rama Ranjuna who also marries Puteri Kencana Mayang Mas as his prize for winning the competition to neutralise and uproot the magic tree.

One final romance that deserves brief mention here is that of Laksmana and Puteri Bongsu, the youngest daughter of Ratu Mambang Kuning (whose other two daughters are named Puteri Rakna Emas and Puteri Maran Kesuma) in the story *Jintan Mas Indera Bayu Rupa*. This story is interesting not only because, amongst the dozen or so stories being discussed here, it is the only one in which Laksmana plays the central role but also because the Laksmana-Puteri Bongsu romance is unique in that it is brought about as a result of direct intervention by fate in the form of Dewa Sinar Matahari.

Laksmana leaves his brother, Seri Rama, to go to an unnamed mountain to meditate. The mountain, because of this incident, gains the name of Gunung Laksmana. While Laksmana is thus meditating, Dewa Sinar Matahari decides to test his ability to resist sexual temptation (*nafsu*). He therefore transforms Laksmana into a beautiful male bird. Similarly the god transforms Puteri Bongsu into an extremely beautiful female bird. The two birds, when brought together, immediately respond to each other. After some time they are returned to their original human forms. While all this is happening, both Laksmana and Puteri Bongsu dream of each other although they have never met before. Later on the princess discovers she is pregnant, gains the disgrace of the court and the anger of her father, and is banished. She enters into a forest, Hutan Batu Hitam Hijau Senari Dewa, where, after some time, a son is born to her.

Meanwhile two god-princes from Kayangan, Jintan Mas and Indera Bayu by name, meet the princess in the forest and wish to marry her. She rejects both of them. Their suggestion that her child be given a composite name derived from their name is, however, accepted. The son is thus named Jintan Mas Indera Bayu Rupa. When he grows up, the prince wishes to find his father. Puteri Bongsu gives him a description, based upon the dream she had while he was in fact being conceived in his parents' bird-form. The description includes the fact that Laksmana's skin is red in colour. She also gives him several weapons, including a magic stick (*tongkat sakti*) and a *keris*, that were born together with him. Jintan Mas Indera Bayu Rupa has several adventures including a romantic tryst with Puteri Tun Tidur of the kingdom of Benua Keling and a war with her fiance during which his magic weapons are taken from him and thrown aside. The *tongkat sakti* lands on Seri Rama's palace in Siusia Mendarapura, causing considerable disturbance and anxiety. No one, however, can lift it. Seri Rama's outstanding astrologer, Babusanam, indicates that only Jintan Mas Indera Bayu Rupa and his mother Puteri Bongsu can lift the *tongkat sakti.*

Meanwhile in Benua Keling Jintan Mas Indera Bayu Rupa, who collapsed when his weapons were taken from him, is thought to be dead. Preparations are underway for his funeral when Seri Rama arrives looking for him. Seri Rama requests the body of Jintan Mas Indera Bayu Rupa so that it can be taken back to Siusia Mendarapura. His request is turned down and a war breaks out between his forces and those of Benua Keling. Seri Rama wins. The body of Jintan Mas Indera Bayu Rupa is brought back to his palace. The *tongkat sakti* still cannot be lifted. Neither can Jintan Mas Indera Bayu Rupa be brought back to life by anyone. Babusanam insists that Puteri Bongsu must be found, and the search for the princess, led by Seri Rama and Laksmana, begins. When she's finally discovered and brought back to Siusia Mendarapura, she revives her son and lifts the *tongkat sakti* which now seems to rise of its own accord despite its extreme weight. Order is restored in Siusia Mendarapura and the reconciliation between Laksmana, Puteri Bongsu and Jintan Mas Indera Bayu Rupa takes place.

3. The Expulsion of a Deity from Kayangan

The expulsion of a deity from Kayangan usually takes place as the result of a specified or unspecified crime. In the *ranting* stories this motif appears several times. In *Raden Kelana Tiga*, Dewa Kerma Jaya is transformed into an ape, Kera Mas Geliga Sakti, and cast upon an earthly mountain. To bring about his meeting with Seri Rama and his ultimate restoration as a god, Kera Mas Geliga Sakti kidnaps a princess, Puteri Melur Mas. Seri Rama, during one of his many secret disappearances from Siusia Mendarapura, arrives in the kingdom of Ratu Maheran and is immediately asked to help in the rescue of the damsel in distress. With the advice from Pak Dogol, Seri Rama, using his magic arrow Ganiwat Sodoroko is able to wound Kera Mas Geliga Sakti who is in fact only temporarily assuming a simian form. Dewa Kerma Jaya immediately recovers his normal form, thanks to Seri Rama for whom he has awaited a considerable length of time, and returns to Kayangan. Seri Rama marries Puteri Melur Mas.

In *Cerita Pak Dogol*, Bentara Ibraham commits a crime and is thus expelled by Betara Guru. He falls to the earth, and taking shape as a dragon, Ular Naga Bersembur, lives in a pond. He can only be restored to his former shape and glory by someone of divine origin. To attain his liberation, he transforms himself into a bird, enters Sita Dewi's palace and kidnaps her. Seri Rama, upon the discovery that Sita Dewi is missing, at first thinks she has left him and is angry with her. Pak Dogol, however, convinces the hero of his wife's fidelity. On the advice of Babusanam, his astrologer-*cum*-fortune teller, Seri Rama discovers the whereabouts of his wife. He sends his forces to rescue her. They fail and preparations are made for Seri Rama to personally battle the dragon. In the meantime, another prince, Raja Kurang Se Empat Puluh, has tried to kill the dragon to take Sita Dewi for himself. His attempt ends in failure. Seri Rama soon arrives to face Ular Naga Bersembur. In the ensuing battles with the dragon Seri Rama is at first unable to overcome the monster. He seeks Pak Dogol's advice. The old man tells Seri Rama that the hero must use his keris, named Lok Sembilan, piercing the dragon in its open mouth, for that is the only way in which Naga

Bersembur can be overcome. Seri Rama thus succeeds in wounding the dragon which turns into Dewa Bentara Ibraham. He thanks Seri Rama for his help and returns to the Kayangan. After several further adventures, including a battle with Raja Kurang Se Empat Puluh who attempts to kidnap the rescued Sita Dewi, and with Pak Dogol, who incurs Seri Rama's wrath and thus gets banished, Seri Rama and his wife finally return to Siusia Mendarapura.

4. The Kidnapping of Sita Dewi

Cerita Pak Dogol, which we have just discussed, illustrates one instance of the kidnapping of Sita Dewi by a god, Dewa Bentara Ibraham, disguised as a dragon. *Hajal Sri Betara Nala* is another interesting example of such a kidnapping. In this story the powerful and power-hungry Hajal Sri Betara Nala kidnaps Sita Dewi after he has succeeded in capturing both Seri Rama and Laksmana. He tells Sita Dewi that Seri Rama is dead, and that she should therefore become his wife. He builds her a new kingdom and several times attempts to seduce her. She is, however, protected by a pair of birds, Burung Jentayu and Burung Sumpah Puteri. Hajal Sri Betara Nala tries to use the services of various *dukuns* to influence Sita Dewi to respond to his advances, but no one succeeds. Finally Pak Dogol and Wak Long enter the palace as *dukun* and assistant *dukun* respectively. They advise Sita Dewi to put on the pretence that she is fond of her captor, while they look for ways and means of rescuing her and her husband. After the final battle between Hajal Sri Betara Nala and Pak Dogol in his form as Dewa Sang Yang Tunggal, in which it is discovered that Hajal Sri Betara Nala is in fact created from a drop of Sang Yang Tunggal's sweat, a form to which he ultimately returns, Seri Rama and Sita Dewi are rescued.

5. Seri Rama's Disappearance and search by Sita Dewi

In Raden Kelana Tiga, Seri Rama secretly leaves his country and after the defeat of Kera Mas Geliga Sakti, as we have seen, marries Puteri Melur Mas whom he has rescued from that ape. Sita Dewi, meanwhile, getting both worried and fed up with Seri Rama's absence, goes looking for him disguised as Raden Kelana Tiga, a male warrior. Their encounter leads to a fierce battle between the disguised Sita Dewi and Seri Rama. Seri Rama is unable to see through her disguise and wonders who it could be that is fighting so well. Eventually Pak Dogol reveals the true identity of Raden Kelana Tiga, and Seri Rama exposes Sita Dewi by removing her disguise. This leads to a reconciliation between Seri Rama and his wife.

6. Separation and Reconciliation

The theme of separation and reconciliation appears as a highly recurrent feature of the *ranting* tales. Several instances have already been mentioned in the preceding pages. Here perhaps it is timely to take a closer look at the expulsions of two highly important *ranting* characters, Pak Dogol and Hanuman Kera Putih. The expulsion of Pak Dogol, Seri Rama's trusted friend, confident and adviser, as well as the superior god (Dewa Sang Yang Tunggal) in disguise, occurs many times in the *ranting* tales. In this respect, there are two highly interesting stories which deserve mention here: *Cerita Pak Dogol* and *Kerak Nasi*. In *Kerak Nasi* Pak Dogol and Wak Long are expelled by Seri Rama for disturbing the peace and quarrelling when he has specifically asked them not to disturb his nap. Their argument arises over some scorched rice. Seri Rama will not accept any explanation or apology. Pak Dogol is highly upset when Seri Rama kicks Wak Long, and this firms his resolution both to leave the service of Seri Rama and also to teach the arrogant king a lesson. In the forest, their home in banishment, one day while Wak Long is asleep Pak Dogol transforms himself into a giant, Jin Gempa Alam. In this form he attacks Seri Rama's palace, demanding that Sita Dewi be surrendered to him. Seri Rama responds with an attack on Jin Gempa Alam, but the hero is powerless before the Jin. He consults his fortune teller, Babusanam, who realises the truth but keeps his knowledge away from the king. Seri Rama is merely instructed to recall Pak Dogol for as long as Pak Dogol does not return, Jin Gempa Alam will keep threatening and attacking Siusia Mendarapura. Seri Rama sends his minister, Sagariwa to persuade Pak Dogol to return to defend his country. Pak Dogol returns, but as soon as he is told that the Jin is no longer in Siusia Mendarapura, he decides to return into exile. Seri Rama, however, apologises to Pak Dogol for his earlier uncouth behaviour, and asks Pak Dogol to stay in Siusia Mendarapura again.

In *Cerita Pak Dogol*, when Hanuman and Seri Rama are engaged in a fierce battle with Raja Kurang Se Empat Puluh who has attempted to kidnap Sita Dewi, Sita Dewi, who has been left by her husband in the protection of Pak Dogol, hears a scream. She thinks that Seri Rama is in trouble and therefore orders Pak Dogol to go and investigate. (The scream is, in fact, Hanuman's as he celebrates his victory over Raja Kurang Se Empat Puluh.) Pak Dogol refuses to leave Sita Dewi saying that both Seri Rama and Hanuman Kera Putih are capable of defending themselves against Raja Kurang Se Empat Puluh. Moreover, he has been specifically given the charge of Sita Dewi, and it is his duty to obey his king and to protect her. Sita Dewi, however, accuses Pak Dogol of desiring Seri Rama's death so that he himself can marry her. Pak Dogol is extremely hurt and cries for this is one of the biggest insults ever hurled at him by anyone. Sita Dewi repeats the accusation and finally, to prove her wrong, Pak Dogol has no choice but to leave her. Seri Rama is surprised to see the old man. He in turn accuses Pak Dogol of being disobedient and disloyal. What if something should happen to Sita Dewi? Pak Dogol is ashamed to relate what really happened between him and Sita Dewi. When he has no choice he relates the incident to Seri Rama so that his own good name is cleared. Seri Rama, upon hearing Pak Dogol's explanation accuses the old man of lying. At this Pak Dogol is doubtly hurt. Seri Rama too tells Pak Dogol he can leave immediately as his services are no longer required. Pak Dogol is beaten and chased away by the king. Both he and his companion, Wak Long, arrive at the kingdom of Putung Berasap where the king, Raja Beluda, has just died. They enter in the service of the queen. Here one day Pak Dogol decides to demonstrate his supernatural powers to Wak Long. He transforms himself into a giant in the shape of Raja Beluda, while Wak Long he transforms into the shape of the Prime Minister of Putung Berasap. Pak Dogol leaves to go and meditate on a nearby mountain, and Wak Long retains his form as prime minister of Putung Berasap. Special instructions are given by Pak Dogol to Wak Long regarding Seri Rama, who is expected to arrive in Putung Berasap. Wak Long is to serve food, but the chicken meat is to be washed in drain water.

Seri Rama arrives in Putung Berasap, and Wak Long, as prime minister, throws the banquet as instructed by Pak Dogol. At this Seri Rama is upset and feels insulted. A war breaks out between Seri Rama and Wak Long, who, unable to bear the assault of Seri Rama, calls for Pak Dogol who immediately arrives in his giant shape as Raja Beluda for the long expected confrontation with Seri Rama. The battle that takes place is an extremely fierce one ; Pak Dogol chases Seri Rama to the kingdom of Tok Maharisi, Sita Dewi's father and thence to Kayangan where even the gods refuse to assist Seri Rama, knowing the true identity of Raja Beluda. Seri Rama next runs to the palace of his father, Sirat Maharaja. Here Sirat Maharaja advises Seri Rama to give up the fight against Raja Beluda, and in fact to kneel before the huge form and pay it homage (*sembah*). Seri Rama does so, but immediately collapses in a faint. Pak Dogol regains his normal shape and helps Seri Rama recover. Seri Rama, upon seeing Pak Dogol, thinks that he's just come back from his banishment and wonders what happened to Raja Beluda. He apologises to Pak Dogol for having treated him harshly in the Sita Dewi incident. Pak Dogol learns that Sita Dewi has not yet been found. Pak Dogol goes first to meet Wak Long and then on to look for Sita Dewi. She is found wondering, lost in a forest. All of them return to Siusia Mendarapura.

In *Hanuman Layang Putih* Lalobet and Lalobak, two nephews of Seri Rama and cousins of Hanuman Kera Putih, violate a custom which requires that no one should leave or enter Siusia Mendarapura for a certain period while a special *puja* is going on. For this violation, they are to be banished from the country. Hanuman does not agree with Seri Rama's verdict. They quarrel and as a result Hanuman is also banished. Seri Rama disclaims him as a son. Hanuman therefore leaves Siusia Mendarapura and goes to the kingdom of his mother, Puteri Maya Angin. From this point the story gets highly complicated as Hanuman Kera Putih tries to arrange a marriage for two of Seri Rama's other sons, Lak Juna and Lak Palembang. Hanuman's proposal on behalf of his cousins is rejected by the King of Samaran Kilat on the grounds that Seri Rama and all his male heirs are notorious for stealing other people's wives and fiancees. They do not show any respect for people or for the institution of marriage itself.

Hanuman Layang Putih involves several battles between Seri Rama and Hanuman, and at each of these battles Hanuman shows himself to be indubitably a better fighter than Seri Rama. Seri Rama runs to his father's place and thence to the Kayangan where the gods transform Seri Rama into a Jin. Hanuman, uses the influence that Pak Dogol wields in the Kayangan. Pak Dogol and Betara Guru eventually bring about a reconciliation between the warring parties including Hanuman Kera Putih and Seri Rama. *Hanuman Layang Putih* is an unusual *Ramayana ranting* mainly from the fact that Hanuman is pitted against Seri Rama in such a violent manner. Normally, as in the standard *Hikayat Seri Rama*, Hanuman is the loyal general of Seri Rama.

7. The theft of various Princesses

It is obvious that the majority of *Wayang Siam's Ramayana ranting* stories are adventure-romances. As such abductions of princesses feature extensively in them. It is interesting that in *Hanuman Layang Putih*, Seri Rama and his male descendants are accused of having no respect for engagements or marriages (except perhaps their own). Seri Rama feels complete liberty in stealing women engaged or otherwise attached to others. The same example is shown in these stories by other characters including Hanuman Bongsu in *Hajal Sri Betara Nala.* In this story Hanuman Bongsu wishes to marry Puteri Chaya Juita from Semayam Bunga who is already engaged to Raja Berma Dewa of Tanjung Batu. Hanuman enters Semayam Batu during the marriage preparations for the marriage of Puteri Chaya Juita and Raja Berma Dewa. He kills the prince and kidnaps the princess. This leads to the invasion of Seri Rama's kingdom by Hajal Sri Betara Nala, the guru of the Raja of Semayam Bunga. Numerous magical acts which lead to the capture even of Seri Rama, the transformation of Babusanam into a dragon and the capture of Sita Dewi who refuses to marry Hajal Sri Betara Nala take place. When there seems to be no more hope left for Seri Rama's clan, Pak Dogol as Dewa Sang Yang Tunggal, the all powerful of gods, climbs into the Kayangan and with his sword, Pedang Sakti Gangga Alam, kills Betara Nala who in fact has been created from the sweat of Sang Yang Tunggal.

Hajal Sri Betara Nala is a complex tale containing most of the motifs we have discussed and a large cast of characters. It is important, again, principally for the major part played by supernatural forces on the one hand Dewa Betara Guru and on the other Dewa Sang Yang Tunggal, in bringing human problems to a solution. All the characters, including that great hero Seri Rama, are mere pawns in the eternal struggle between good and evil. The interesting thing is that a conflict of such cosmic proportions is started by the mere kidnapping of a princess, much as in the main *Ramayana* story.

8. Invasions

One final theme or motif, that of invasions, need not detain us long for it has been encountered in several of the tales thus far discussed and only one further example will therefore suffice. In *Hanuman Bongsu*, Raja Sibigadong, a close friend and ally of the late Rawana, king of Langkapuri, invades Langkapuri in an attempt to remove Perbuana from the throne which once belonged to Perbuana's brother, Rawana. As a result of his failure in physically removing Perbuana from the throne, Raja Sibigadong stabs Perbuana in the chest with a keris which is finally removed by Hanuman Bongsu, son of that mighty warrior Hanuman Kera Putih and Puteri Bongsu, daughter of Perbuana. Seri Rama and his forces arrive in Langkapuri and Hanuman Kera Putih has the job of flying to Kayangan to obtain the Wijaya Mala grass which alone can restore consciousness to Perbuana. Hanuman obtains the grass after a fierce battle with its guardians, Ibu and Bapak Sang Dera. His final mission is to destory Raja Sibigadong, and this done, Seri Rama and his entourage return to Siusia Mendarapura, having once more installed Perbuana on the Langkapuri throne and having restored order in that isle. The noble forces, as usual, must emerge victorious. The eternal battle, symbolised by the conflict between Seri Rama and Rawana is reflected thus in every battle containing in the *ranting* stories found in Wayang Kulit Siam.

In the working out of the various themes and motifs thus far discussed, several recurrent devices get into use. These include transformations, predictions, meditations, marriage competitions, disguises, battle-tests of various sorts, kidnappings, rescues and divine intercessions, separations and reconciliations. Indeed all of this is standard fare in romances, mythologies as well as folk and fairy tales the world over. Yet in their use with [the infusion of local spirit the *ranting* stories gain a character all their own, a strength which guarantees their constant use and continuous transmission through an oral tradition utilising as its vehicle the *Wayang Siam* Shadow Play.

Characterisation

From even a cursory glance at the *Hikayat Maharaja Wana* and the *ranting* tales it becomes obvious that the major characters of the *Hikayat* continue to play fairly important roles in the *rantings*. These include Sirat Maharaja (Dasaratha), Seri Rama, Sita Dewi, Hanuman, and to a lesser extent Laksmana, Perbuana, Babusanam and Sagariwa. A considerable force of new characters, non-existent in any of the classical versions of the epic (whether Indian, South-east Asian, or Malaysian are introduced into the *ranting* stories, reflecting the fact that these tales have been assigned a period after the great war in Langkapuri and the death of Rawana which concludes the trunk story.

Seri Rama, on the whole, continues to play a pivotal role in a considerable number of *ranting* tales though the roles assigned to him here nowhere equal those in the main *Ramayana* story in length, depth or solidness of character. He is no longer the unequal, idealised hero, the incarnation of Vishnu that he is in the Indian *Ramayana* versions, particularly in Tulsidas' *Ramcaritmanas*. In the main *Ramayana* trunk stories he already has lost some of those qualities, partly as a necessary consequent of the seeping in of Islamic elements, so that very often he appears a weakling. In the *ranting* tales, this erosion of Seri Rama's personality is further extended. His heroism seems somewhat tarnished, perhaps reflecting his advancing age, since in these tales his children and grand-children assume roles of greater significance. On the other hand, a new aspect to his character, never encountered in the classical epic versions, is his role as a great lover who is arrogant, even boastful of his exploits and certainly very proud of the liberties he takes with princesses already betrothed unto others. In the *ranting* Seri Rama marries princess after princess almost without end, even though some of these are discarded soon after as he decides to return to his faithful wife, Sita Dewi, or to perform meditation to gain further spiritual and physical strength. In the severest of wars Seri Rama can at times stand his own, but often needs help and support, if only in the form of timely advice of the right kind at the precise critical moment. Many a time he is saved from imminent disaster by Hanuman or Pak Dogol, who despite his comic and ugly exterior semblance is in fact the masked Dewa Sang Yang Tunggal, the most powerful of gods in the Kayangan.

Sita Dewi too is a less developed role in the *ranting* though essentially she retains her image as the faithful wife. She can, here in the *ranting*, if necessary become aggressive as she does in *Raden Kelana Tiga* when she engages in a fierce battle against her husband and nearly defeats him. On the whole she remains in the background often being kidnapped and recovered in a pattern reminiscent of the main event in the classical *Ramayana*, still the ideal wife, but no longer with the perfect husband, for Seri Rama has developed the tendency to chase other women. Similarly, Laksmana only rarely emerges to the forefront in the *ranting* tales his traditional role being to accompany or assist Seri Rama on the latter's missions. This is unlike the more aggressive role that Laksmana plays in the trunk stories in *Wayang Siam* where he is often cast in a mould that makes him really the more interesting and at times even the more important character than his elder brother. Yet, inspite of this image, there are exceptions in the *ranting*, as for example in *Jintan Mas Indera Bayu Rupa* where Laksmana assumes a leading role.

The limelight in the *ranting* shifts to the minor characters, particularly Hanuman, Pak Dogol and characters not even named in the classical *Ramayana* versions. Other such characters include Hanuman Bongsu, Lak Juna, Lak Palembang, Rama Ranjuna and the several gods and goddesses who have been condemned to live on earth as punishment for heavenly crimes until their restitution. In this sense, both in terms of themes and characters, the world of the *ranting* is a new world, quite different from that of the epic and peopled by other beings. Several of these new characters serve as the *focii* of the *ranting* tales.

Hanuman has been further developed, beyond the pages of the *Hikayat Maharaja Wana* and given a fairly large family. Still aggressive as ever he is full of tremendous physical strength and both this as well as his courage continue to make him a valuable asset to Seri Rama, and many a victim of ogres and demons or evil forces. In *Hanuman Layang Putih* his tremendously aggressive nature comes to the fore. Here he ends up with several severe battles against Seri Rama. Seri Rama is unable to defeat him and rushes for divine intercession to break the deadlock. On the other hand Hanuman continues to be the loving son of Seri Rama that he is in the *Hikayat Maharaja Wana.*

Pak Dogol, that earthly, misshapen mixture of the comic and the divine entered the service of Seri Rama after the death of Rawana together with his companion and friend, Wak Long, created out of the dirt (*daki*) of his own body. In the *ranting* Pak Dogol plays a vital and interesting role, often revealing his true identity plays a vital and interesting role, often revealing his true identity as Dewa Sang Tunggal or Dewa Si Alam Tunggal, the superior even of Betara Guru. In the story named after him, Pak Dogol plays a central role in the release of Sita Dewi from the clutches of a god-turned-dragon. Through Pak Dogol's super vision and advice Seri Rama is able to shoot his arrow at the one single spot on the dragon's body that can be wounded, his open mouth. Seri Rama thus at one and the same blow obtains the release of Sita Dewi and assists the dewa-turned-dragon to regain his original shape, the curse upon him now no longer effective. In the same story, after Dogol's banishment which comes as a consequence of an unfounded allegation by Sita Dewi that Pak Dogol wishes Seri Rama dead so that he himself can marry her, Pak Dogol takes revenge against his king by transforming himself into a gigantic replica of the dead king of Putung Berasap, Raja Beluda. Even the gods refuse to help Seri Rama, for they know Pak Dogol's true identity. Finally Seri Rama is advised by his father, Sirat Maharaja, to pay obeisance (*sembah*) to the gigantic form of Raja Beluda alias Pak Dogol. Here as in other stories, the divine background and true identity of Pak Dogol remains concealed even from those very close to him. In most instances when Seri Rama thus confronts Pak Dogol, the hero appears weak and helpless. Often only Pak Dogol's own love for Seri Rama and the timely intercession of the gods saves Seri Rama's skin. The little but important story, *Kerak Nasi* (*Scorched Rice*) reveals both Pak Dogol's loyalty to Seri Rama as well as his true identity as the

'Orang Kesarongan' or 'Concealed One', Dewa Sang Yang Tunggal. Here, in the shape of Jin Gempa Alam, he attacks Siusia Mendarapura leaving Seri Rama quite helpless. Ironically, Seri Rama is advised by his experienced and trusted astrologer, Babusanam, to seek out Pak Dogol, for only he can prevent a recurrance of Jin Gempa Alam's attack upon Siusia Mendarapura.

Pak Dogol, who is now featured in both the trunk stories of *Ramayana* and the *ranting* has given the *Wayang Siam* a new dimension and a tremendous interest. On the one hand he is the ineffable Dewa Sang Yang Tunggal, on the other the tremendously earthy but wise clown who enlivens every performance with his tongue-in-cheek to highly serious comments, sound advice, and constant arguments with the chatty Wak Long. In this sense Pak Dogol is the clown *par excellence*, a brother to Semar of the Javanese *Wayang Purwa*, and possibly historically a descendant of that venerable old man ; perhaps even a distant cousin of the *Vidushaka* of classical Sanskrit theatre. For all of them, like the shadow theatre forms of the region themselves, share much that is common.

Observations

There is no doubt that the Hindu epic, *Ramayana*, has captured the imagination of people all over south-east Asia including Malaysia where it finds its principal expression in the *Wayang Siam* shadow play tradition of Kelantan and, to a very limited extent, in some of the recently choreographed dance-dramas based upon traditional model. In *Wayang Siam* the main *Ramayana* theme in its Malay version, *Hikayat Maharaja Wana*, is parallel to the literary versions of the epic found in India and elsewhere in south-east Asia with regional or national variations lending it local colour. In addition there exist locally created stories using themes and motifs that parallel the main *Ramayana* story, characters who appear in the epic as well as additional characters, mainly the offsprings of the epic heroes. These numerous branch stories (*cerita-cerita ranting*) today form the bulk of *Ramayana* material used in *Wayang Siam*.

The main *Ramayana* story is widely known, either in part or in full, by all *dalangs* and it has traditionally formed a part of their training in the art of puppetry. It is however, seldom, if ever, performed and even then never in full due to its length and to the fact that it is not known to *dalang* or audience members, except in its bare outline. The *ranting* stories, however, continue to enjoy considerable popularity in *Wayang Siam* areas, although the audience for these too is diminishing with the gradual loss in importance of the *Wayang Siam* tradition itself due to economic, social and religious factors. New stories based upon *Ramayana* or other motifs such as those taken from the Javanese *Panji* cycle continue to be created by a limited number of *Wayang Siam dalangs* mainly to sustain interest in the *Wayang Siam* itself, to provide themselves with a continuing means of earning a livelihood.

On the whole the religious elements in the *Ramayana* as found in Malaysia have been considerably devalued, so that even the important reincarnation of Vishnu theme is no longer important. This is to be expected in a country where Islam is the official religion and where recent years have seen the beginnings of Islamic revival in addition to modernisation. The emphasis has shifted to the plot, characters and dramatic as well as comic interest. In spite of this, however, the epic continues to enjoy an aura of sacredness which the *rantings* do not have. This is particularly obvious from the use of its characters side by side with other Hindu deities in addition to local animistic spirits in rituals opening and concluding *Wayang Siam* performances. No performance of *Wayang Siam* or other Kelantanese traditional theatre forms takes place without a *buka panggung* or theatre consecration ritual. In the invocations and *menteras* featured in such rituals apart from the gods, including Shiva as Nataraja, Ganesa (renamed Sang Gana) and others from the extensive Hindu pantheon, Maharaja Wana and his forces and the opposing camp headed by Seri Rama are invariably mentioned. And this, inspite of the overall Islamic tone of the rituals themselves. The same is true of the Prologue to the *Wayang Siam*, the *Dalang Muda* episode, which introduces Seri Rama in extremely glorious language to both his generals and to the Kelantanese audience. In more than one way, therefore, the Hindu epic *Ramayana* continues to colour, albeit on a diminished scale, the fabric of Kelantanese life.

APPENDIX

Selected *Ramayana Ranting* Stories

HANUMAN BONGSU

After the great war in Langkapuri and the death of Rawana, the country is taken over by Seri Rama. To reward Perbuana, Rawana's younger brother, for his services and loyalty to Seri Rama, Seri Rama arranges the marriage of his own son, Hanuman Kera Putih, with the daughter of Perbuana, Puteri Bongsu. Having stayed a certain duration in Langkapuri, Seri Rama prepares to return to his own country, Siusia Mendarapura. Before his departure, however, he appoints Perbuana as regent of Langkapuri, and gives specific instructions regarding its administration. Perbuana is not to surrender his throne to anyone, no matter what happens.

When Raja Sibigadong, a close friend and ally of Rawana, learns of Rawana's death at the hands of Seri Rama, he goes to Langkapuri to avenge his friend's death. Raja Sibigadong accuses Perbuana of treachery and disloyalty to his brother, Rawana, and of consorting with Seri Rama to kill Rawana, thus usurping the throne of Langkapuri. He tries to force Perbuana to give up the Langapuri throne. Perbuana, however, does not intend to surrender the throne, for he is the regent of Langkapuri at the pleasure of Seri Rama, the conqueror of the island and the destroyer of Rawana. Moreover, there is his promise to Seri Rama to stay put on the throne. Raja Sibigadong several times drags Perbuana from the throne, but Perbuana returns to it. In his anger Raja Sibigadong stabs Perbuana in the chest, just below the left nipple, with a keris. Perbuana falls sprawling on to the ground screaming for assistance from his daughter Puteri Bongsu, who at that time is nine months pregnant. Puteri Bongsu comes to Perbuana only to find him unconscious with the keris still in his chest. She cries and laments the fate of her father. At that moment there is no one in the palace who can be of assistance to her except Pak Dogol and Wak Long. She therefore decides to enlist their help.

Puteri Bongsu calls both of these attendants before her and instructs that one of them should go to Siusia Mendarapura carrying a message from her to Seri Rama informing him of the attack on Langkapuri. Since neither Pak Dogol nor Wak Long has the courage to go alone, both of them go off together, leaving immediately in the direction of Siusia Mendarapura.

Meanwhile the child in the womb of Puteri Bongsu, upon hearing her consistent crying and lamenting feels sorry for her. He is anxious to find out the cause of his mother's distress. He therefore quickly kicks his way out of the womb, thus causing Puteri Bongsu to faint. The child brings his mother back to consciousness by sprinkling some fluid from the womb upon her. Upon recovering consciousness, Puteri Bongsu is surprised to see the child and asks who he is. The child replies that he is, in fact, her son.

Puteri Bongsu then relates to her son the events that have caused his grandfather, Maharaja Perbuana, to be thus pierced by the keris of Raja Sibigadong. She also informs him that before his father, Hanuman Kera Putih, left Langkapuri, he gave her specific instructions regarding the naming of his yet unborn child. Should a son be born to Puteri Bongsu, he must be given a name which contains a part of the father's name and a part of the mother's name. She therefore decides to name her son Hanuman Bongsu.

Hanuman Bongsu seeks his mother's permission to go in search of Seri Rama to tell him of the events that have taken place in Pulau Langkapuri.

She gives him her permission, but before he leaves she tells him that his father is a white ape, and that the skin of his grandfather, Seri Rama, is green Hanuman Bongsu flies in the direction of Siusia Mendarapura.

During his flight, Hanuman Bongsu comes across a glittering orb of fire. He desires to eat the object, and thus goes to catch hold of it. The object is, in fact, the sun, being drawn on a rope by Dewa Sinar Matahari. Feeling that someone is holding on to the orb, Dewa Sinar Matahari turns back to have a look. Hanuman Bongsu is immediately burnt to dust by the powerful rays emanating from Dewa Sinar Matahari's face. Only a single body-hair made of copper remains.

To find out who really was that came so close to him Dewa Sinar Matahari using the copper body-hair, restores Hanuman Bongsu to life. Hanuman Bongsu introduces himself and relates the story of his origins. He also explains to Dewa Sinar Matahari his mission, i.e. to seek Seri Rama and Hanuman Kera Putih. Dewa Sinar Matahari thus realises that Hanuman Bongsu is the grandson of Seri Rama and therefore his own grandson as well. He then spits into the mouth of Hanuman Bongsu a star to serve as a sign of Hanuman Bongsu's divine descent.

Hanuman Bongsu continues his flight to Siusia Mendarapura. Upon arrival there he informs Seri Rama of the attack upon Langkapuri by Raja Sibigadong and the fact that Raja Perbuana has been made unconscious by a keris pierced in his chest. At first Seri Rama does not believe the story. He asks for details regarding Hanuman Bongsu's identity and origins as well as the names of his parents. Hanuman Bongsu provides the necessary details and shows his grandfather the star placed in his mouth by Dewa Sinar Matahari. With that evidence Seri Rama is convinced and acknowledges Hanuman Bongsu as his grandson. While Seri Rama is preparing his forces to go into Langkapuri, Pak Dogol and Wak Long arrive in Siusia Mendarapura with the message from Puteri Bongsu. They are amazed at the mixture of human and simian features in Hanuman Bongsu. Seri Rama leaves with Hanuman, Hanuman Bongsu, Pak Dogol, Wak Long and all his forces for Pulau Langkapuri.

Upon arrival in Langkapuri, Seri Rama tries to remove the keris from Perbuana's chest, but he is unsuccessful. Hanuman, who tries his hand next, is equally unsuccessful. After him, Hanuman Bongsu successfully removes the keris. Despite the keris being drawn from his chest, however, Perbuana remains unconscious. Seri Rama then consults Pak Dogol as to the cure for Perbuana. Pak Dogol replies that only the Wijaya Mala grass, which grows under the protection of Ibu and Bapak Sang Dera in the sky-country, Kayangan, can restore consciousness to Perbuana. He further explains that only Hanuman Kera Putih will be able to reach Kayangan to fetch the grass. Hanuman leaves on his mission. While he's plucking the grass, Bapak Sang Dera and Ibu Sang Dera attack Hanuman in an attempt to capture him. War breaks out between Hanuman and Bapak Sang Dera. Hanuman is victorious and he successfully brings the Wijaya Mala grass to earth.

As soon as Hanuman Kera Putih reaches Langkapuri, the Wijaya Mala grass is dipped in some water, which is then sprinkled on to the body of Perbuana. Perbuana recovers and explains to Seri Rama and the rest what happend to lead him into being thus pierced with a keris by Raja Sibigadong. Without further ado, Hanuman Kera Putih proceeds to seek out Raja Sibigadong. Seri Rama and his forces, having thus reinstated Raja Perbuana on the throne of Langkapuri, return to Siusia Mendarapura.

KERAK NASI

One day as he is feeling unwell, extremely tired as well as sleepy, Seri Rama, the king of Siusia Mendarapura, calls his two attendants, Pak Dogol and Wak Long before him. He tells them that he is going to take a nap, and that they are to take care of the palace. He orders them not to disturb him. Pak Dogol and Wak Long agree to obey his instructions.

Not long afterwards, Wak Long begins to feel hungry. He suggests to Pak Dogol that they both go into the kitchen to look for some rice. The rice-pot is empty. There is however, some scorched rice sticking to its bottom. Both Pak Dogol and Wak Long struggle to get the scorched rice. As a result they start quarreling and screaming, thus disturbing Seri Rama.

Seri Rama awakens and scolds them. 'The two of you have no breeding or manners. Didn't I tell you not to cause any disturbance? Both of you are really scoundrels.' Wak Long asks for Seri Rama's forgiveness at the same time jokingly attempting to shift the blame to Pak Dogol. Seri Rama is not affected by Wak Long's appeal. He indicates that he does not wish them to stay in his palace any more. He will have nothing more to do with them. Pak Dogol next asks for forgiveness, saying that he really cannot leave the service of Seri Rama. Seri Rama's anger does not abate. He further scolds and kicks them. Wak Long goes flying against a wall.

At this Pak Dogol gets very upset. He asks Wak Long to follow him and they both leave the palace to live in exile in a forest. On arrival at the forest, they decide to take a nap to relieve them of their tiredness. When Wak Long is sound asleep, Pak Dogol leaves his body and transforms himself into a giant, Jin Gempa Alam. In this new shape he heads towards Suisia Mendarapura. Upon arrival at the palace of Seri Rama, Pak Dogol introduces himself as Jin Gempa Alam. He demands that Seri Rama hand over his wife, Sita Dewi to him. In the event that Seri Rama refuses to do so, warns Jin Gempa Alam, he will use force to take Sita Devi, and the entire country of Suisia Mendarapura will be destroyed.

Hearing these words of the giant, Seri Rama feels insulted, he gets extremely angry. He orders his generals, Anila and Anggada, as well as his people to capture the Jin. A fierce war breaks out in which Seri Rama's forces are defeated. Finally Seri Rama himself emerges to meet the challenger in battle. He too is defeated. Seri Rama feels extremely sad at this. He calls his astrologer, Babusanam, to seek advice on the matter and to find a way of defeating the invading Jin.

Babusanam, upon consulting his astrological charts, discovers that in fact it is Pak Dogol, disguised as Jin Gempa Alam, who is causing the upheaval in Siusia Mendarapura. This information, however, is hidden from Seri Rama. Babusanam merely tells the king that Pak Dogol must be found, for as long as Pak Dogol is not brought back Siusia Mendarapura cannot expect any peace. Seri Rama thus orders his minister, Sagariwa, to go in search of Pak Dogol and to invite him back into the palace. While this is happening, Jin Gempa Alam too has mysteriously disappeared.

Meanwhile, Wak Long awakens from his sleep. He shakes Pak Dogol to wake his companion up so that they can both go in search of food. Pak Dogol's body is cold and lifeless. Wak Long, convinced that Pak Dogol has been killed by a tiger, begins to cry. He decides to carry the body of Pak Dogol and to move on alone. He is amazed to note that Pak Dogol is extremely light. Soon afterwards Pak Dogol returns to his body which thus becomes heavy. Wak Long, who can no longer carry it, drops it to the ground. Pak Dogol wakes up.

Wak Long is amazed at all this. He enquires as to where Pak Dogol has been but Pak Dogol claims he has been asleep all along. Wak Long opines that cannot be true, as his body obviously became very light and then suddenly it regained its normal weight. Pak Dogol merely retorts that no one asked Wak Long to carry him. Wak Long feels that somehow Pak Dogol has cheated him. They continue their journey in search of food.

Upon arrival at Siusia Mendarapura, Pak Dogol asks for the whereabouts of Jin Gempa Alam. Seri Rama tells him that the attacker giant suddenly disappeared mysteriously when Sagariwa was given instructions to go in search of Pak Dogol. Hearing this, Pak Dogol prepares to go back into exile. Seri Rama, however, apologises to Pak Dogol and Wak Long for his previous harsh conduct. He requests them to stay in the palace with him. After some persuasion they agree to do so.

RADEN KELANA TIGA

One day the Maharaja of Ratu Maheran comes in audience before his courtiers and ministers, with the news that several princes have, during the past few days, approached him for the hand of his daughter, Puteri Melur Mas. None of the proposals, however, was considered suitable. The Maharaja wishes to go to his daughter's palace to give her his information. He leaves with the queen.

Upon arrival at the palace of Puteri Melur Mas, the Maharaja and his queen give the princess the news of the various unsuccessful proposals. Puteri Melur Mas then requests the permission of her parents to go out for a stroll into the royal garden of Banjaran Sari. The Raja does not allow her to go as he fears that something untoward may happen to his only beloved child. After further persuasion by the princess, however, the king and queen allow Puteri Melur Mas to leave the palace on condition that she does not spend the night at Taman Banjaran Sari. The princess thus happily goes into the garden where she bates, picks flowers, and plays.

At the summit of a nearby mountain, an ape, Kera Mas Geliga Sakti, is meditating. From his place on the mountain, he is able to see into the Banjaran Sari garden, and he soon notices Puteri Melur Mas bathing in the pond. Kera Mas Geliga Sakti descends into the garden and comes to the princess. He flatters and teases her. The princess asks the ape not to get too familiar. She rejects his advances. The ape, however, tells the princess that he intends to marry her, because she is incomparably beautiful and he is in love with her. The princess attempts to stab the ape with a keris, but Kera Mas Geliga Sakti avoids her thrust and she falls to the ground. Kera Mas Geliga Sakti then kidnaps Puteri Melur Mas, taking her to a mountain cave where she is imprisoned. Here the princess cries day and night, but Kera Mas Geliga Sakti refuses to release her.

In the country of Siusia Mendarapura, Raja Seri Rama invites his two attendants, Pak Dogol and Wak Long to go with him on a journey. He intends visiting the neighbouring kingdoms to get acquainted with his fellow rulers. They leave Siusia Mendarapura without the knowledge of Sita Dewi, and soon arrive at the Ratu Maheran palace. At that time the Maharaja of Ratu Maheran and his people are mourning the loss of Puteri Melur Mas and the fact that they have not been able to defeat Kera Mas Geliga Sakti. All their attempts to rescue her have been unsuccessful and the Maharaja has made an announcement offering his kingdom and the hand of Puteri Melur Mas to anyone who can defeat Kera Mas Geliga Sakti and obtain the princess' release.

The Maharaja admits Seri Rama and his companions in audience before him. They inform the Maharaja that they are merely visiting Ratu Maheran to gain his acquaintance. As soon as the introductions have taken place, the Maharaja of Ratu Maheran solicits Seri Rama's help in obtaining the rescue of Puteri Melur Mas. Seri Rama agrees to provide tne necessary help.

Seri Rama and his companions leave Ratu Maheran on their way to the mountain of the ape Kera Mas Geliga Sakti. However, as soon as Seri Rama reaches the hideout of the ape, he is kicked down by Kera Mas Geliga Sakti. This happens three more times. After the fourth such failure, Seri Rama consults Pak Dogol as to the best possible way out of the dilemma. Pak Dogol advises Seri Rama to use his arrow, Ganiwat Sodoroko, which was born together with him. The arrow pierces Kera Mas Geliga Sakti, causing him to bleed profusely. The ape is suddenly transformed into a god, Dewa Kerma Jaya. The god's external ape-like form is, in fact, only a disguise. When Seri Rama witnesses this transformation, he begins to cry and asks for Dewa Kerma Jaya's forgiveness at having shot him with an arrow. The god, however, is not angry with Seri Rama. On the contrary, he is happy for the arrow of Seri Rama; the wise and respected king has restored him to his original form. His ape shape was the result of a curse cast upon him by Betara Guru. who threw Dewa Kerma Jaya out of Kayangan, the sky-country, condemning him to stay upon the mountain until thus released by Seri Rama. Dewa Kerma Jeya, in the form of Kera Mas Geliga Sakti has in fact been awaiting Seri Rama's arrival so that he could be freed from Betara Guru's curse. The kidnapping of Puteri Melur Mas was merely a ruse to thus meet Seri Rama. Dewa Kerma Jaya requests Seri Rama's help to hurl him back onto the mountain top, his place of meditation. Seri Rama agrees to do so.

Seri Rama, Puteri Melur Mas, and the two companions of Seri Rama return to the Ratu Maheran palace. The Maharaja immediately surrenders his throne to Seri Rama, and as earlier promised, marries Puteri Melur Mas to Seri Rama.

Not long after, while Seri Rama is ruling Ratu Maheran peacefully, an ogre comes to know, belatedly, of the announcement made by the Maharaja of Ratu Maheran that anyone able to rescue Puteri Melur Mas can marry her and have his throne as well. The ogre leaves for Ratu Maheran. Upon arrival before Seri Rama he is informed that the princess has, in fact already been released. The ogre gets very angry at the news and attacks Seri Rama. In the ensuing battle, Seri Rama kills the ogre with an arrow.

Meanwhile, back in Siusia Mendarapura, Sita Dewi, who has been awaiting the return of her husband, decides to go in search of him with her two attendants. However, to avoid any danger to themselves, Sita Dewi and her companions disguise themselves as men. Sita Dewi becomes Raden Kelana Tiga while her two attendants become respectively Kelana Tua and Kelana Muda. After some time they arrive at Ratu Maheran, where they see the flag of Seri Rama. Sita Dewi sends a message to Seri Rama that she (Ratu Kelana Tiga) wishes to marry Puteri Melur Mas, Seri Rama's new wife. Seri Rama is angry at this insult and a war breaks out between him and Ratu Kelana Tiga.

Back in Siusia Mendarapura, Hanuman Kera Putih is looking for both his parents. No one knows where they have disappeared. Hanuman thus leaves Siusia Mendarapura to go in search of Seri Rama and Sita Dewi. In his search he comes to Ratu Maheran where he hears the loud clamour of war. Soon he notices Seri Rama, and descends to help his father. Seri Rama is relieved to have Hanuman to help him. They both approach Sita Dewi (Kelana Tiga) with caution fearing that Raden Kelana Tiga will defeat Hanuman. Raden Kelana Tiga, on the other hand, fears that Hanuman will see through her disguise. She orders her companions to keep up the fight against Seri Rama's forces.

Seri Rama is amazed at Raden Kelana Tiga's courage and bravery. He's anxious to find out who the young warrior really is. He therefore sends Pak Dogol and Wak Long to make investigations regarding the identity and lineage of Raden Kelana Tiga. Pak Dogol, in fact, already knows that Raden Kelana Tiga is the disguised Sita Dewi. He keeps this knowledge a secret from all but Wak Long to whom he whispers that Seri Rama is fighting no one but his own wife. This information is leaked by Wak Long to Seri Rama. Seri Rama is surprised, but at the same time realises that during the close encounters with Raden Kelana Tiga he could smell powder, perfume and flowers. He thus becomes convinced that Raden Kelana Tiga is no one but Sita Dewi.

Seri Rama once again asks his warriors to challenge Raden Kelana Tiga. While the battle is raging, he pulls off the disguise of Raden Kelana Tiga, and thus unmasks the true identity of the young and gallant warrior. It is also soon discovered that Raden Kelana Tiga's companions are in fact her attendants, Inang Tua and Inang Muda. With that Seri Rama and Sita Dewi are reconciled. The hero, his wife, Hanuman, Pak Dogol and Wak Long all return to Siusia Mendarapura.

THE GLORY OF RAMA'S CROWN

SOEWITO SANTOSO

A. Introduction

1. The *māhātmya* of the Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin (RK) reads as follows :

> *san yogīśwara śista san sujana sudda manah nira huwus mace sira, byaktāwās ucapanta rin julun adomuka pinakanimitta nin lepas.* (RK XXVI, 50 cd.),

which I translated into ; ' After reading (the Rāmāyaṇa) the great yogins will become proficient (in the Wedas), the good people will obtain a pure mind. If it is read to unfortunate people, be he low or high in rank, they will understand it beyond doubt which will ultimately lead them to heavenly Bliss '.

I should in fact further expound, that "the Wedas" should be understood as "Knowledge" with a capital K, not only limited to the holy scriptures of that name. The "unfortunate people" are the opposite of the *pagawans* (fortunate people) such as pundits, priests, etc. who are knowledgeful people. The phrase " high and low in rank " should also be registered as meaning not only rank, position or status, but also caste (*warnna*), stage of life (*aśrama*) or variation of degrees in the community.

2. Further I elaborated, that the aim or purpose of the writer in writing or retelling the RK was to educate people, to give guidance to people towards *darmma*, so that ultimately one can reach *moksa* through unio mystica. To support this argument I put forward the description of the first night of Rāma and Sītā in Ayodhya, after the long and grievous separation.[1] I felt at that time, that I should do this, because my translation diverges so widely with e.g. those of Juynboll[2] and Poerbatjaraka[3]. So far

concerning the ultimate goal of writing and retelling a story, deeply imprinted in the people's mind as a holy scripture.

3. In Bali in particular, the reading and listening to the story of Rāma in events called "*mabasan*" or "*mabebasan*"[4], has always been conducted in relation with religious affairs. Other expressions of arts derived from it such as dance, dramatic arts, etc., have always been associated with religious observances e.g. birth of children, marriages and death ceremonies.[5] When modern western forms of entertainment (e.g. film) came to the regions of Indonesia, including Bali, it has been evident that original, local art and branches of dramatic art, not affiliated with religion experienced great loss of interest from the people, so that the government and in few cases enlightened individuals had to initiate steps to re-establish them.

4. In Java after the fall of the kingdom of Majapahit (1520 A.D) and the advent of Islam, the story of Rāma was not regarded as holy, though still cherished by the people, non-moslems as well as moslems, as a story filled with good teachings and example of good conduct. In fact the Javanese moslem did not want to lose or abandon his literary inheritance, though preference had to be placed on the literature of the new religion, so that to the students of the literature of ancient Indonesia (Java), it seemed there was a period of decline, even if it was only in outward appearances.

5. Hazeu, in his inaugural address[6] states as follows :

> '*Ongetwijfeld zijn onder involved daarvan de fraaie letteren verwaarloosd : de eerste bekeerlingen van de nieuwen godsdienst moesten wel minachting koesteren, althans onverschillig zijn voor al wat uit de heidenteit afkomstig was of daarvan herinnerde ; moslimsche wetboeken, profetengeschiedenissen en verhandelingen over de mystiek genoten de voorkeur. Evenwel, algeheele verwaarloozing van eigen vroeger zoo geeerde literatuur kon niet duurzaam zijn, dat ware strijdig geweest met de Javaansche geest.*'
> [Without doubt under de influence of it (the fall of Majapahit and the advent of Islam), the literature was neg-

> lected: the first converts must feel disdain, at least uninterested towards everything that originated from the pagan period or that rekindled memories of them; books of moslem-law, biographies of prophets and treatises of mysticism enjoyed preference. Yet, total neglect of own literature, once very highly esteemed could not last very long, it must be against the nature of the Javanese mind.]

Prof. Hazeu was only partly correct, when he made this statement, because even the *walis* or Moslems-saints who brought and spread the Islam to Java did not neglect at all the Javanese culture or any part of it, the very least its literature. On the contrary, they were the most ardent defenders of the Javanese culture, because in their view only through the culture they could reach the Javanese mind. From the very beginning they thought of might and means to convert also the Javanese culture. They established stories, that the *gamelan* (Javanese music instruments) was invented by the *walis* Sunan Kalijaga and Sunan Bonang, that Sunan Kalijaga was even the first *dalang* (puppetteer), etc. In case of the Rāmāyaṇa and other literary works, it was said, that Sunan Kalijaga was the one who noted down the stories told to him by the late king of Amerta, Yudistira, the eldest brother of the Pandawas.[7] Zoetmulder refutes also the statement of Hazeu by saying that aversion to and hatredof the old ways of life and its religion should not be widespread and must have been the exception rather than the rule[8], though he does not rule out the possibility that followers of the new religion looked down deprecatingly and even suspiciously on what they considered relics of a " Heathen " age.[9]

6. Kern, when preparing the edition of the text of the RK complained about the bad state of the Javanese mss., so that he was forced to ignore them and based his edition on the Balinese mss.[10] Zoetmulder explains the bad conditions the Javanese mss. were in, as originating from conservative groups who wanted to maintain tenacious link with the old ways, but increasingly becoming isolated and losing their grasp of the knowledge of the old heritage.[11]

7. I have however a different view. Admitting the existence of the conservative groups, I think, the *walis* realized, as above reiterated, that they could only succeed in their efforts of establishing and spreading the Islam by way of converting also the culture or in other words by accommodating the old culture in Islam, to get acceptance for Islam by the Javanese people. This attitude for sure is very much at variance with that of the followers of pre-Islamic religions. So, apart from the decline in the knowledge of language metre, etc., there is another important element that might become the reason of the deterioration of the transmission of old literary products, that is : for the Balinese copyist, the literature he wants to preserve represents mostly holy scriptures, while for the Javanese (moslem) it has already lost its religious significance. The Balinese still wants to preserve them at their original form and state, while the Javanese (moslem) wants them adjusted to their new belief.

8. To turn back to the Rama-story in particular, the Javanese seems still to regard it as an epic of great educative value, e.g. in the field of morality and others. Despite the teachings of Islam, Sītā or her later manifestations in the *wayang* stories of the Mahabharata-cycle, e.g. Sumbadra, is still regarded as the symbol for women virtues. The *Hastabrata*, the teachings of Rāma to Wibisana has been adhered to by the Javanese kings of Surakarta and Yogyakarta,[12] and at present still contemplated as an effective guidance in statemanship by the politicians and office-bearers in Indonesia.[13]

9. What about the mystical elements of the Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin ?

For a long time, this field seems to be dominated by stories from the Mahabharata-cycle, e.g. the Arjunawiwaha or Mintaraga and the Bima Suci or Dewa Ruci. In the Mintaraga, the discourses between Indra and Arjuna and Arjuna with Siwa are the most interesting parts for the Javanese mystics, whilst the search for the *amreta*, which is expounded as a way to advance one's inner life, culminating in the discourse between Bima and his Spiritual Master (Dewa Ruci) is rendered as the ultimate instruction in one's search for unison with God.[14]

10. As an illustration of how the Rama-story is adapted to Javenese Moslem concepts, I would like to put forward some stanzas from the '*Serat Rama*' (Book of Rama).[15] chapter VII, 11-20 :

11. *Nrepaputra Ramawijaya lingnya ris,*
hèh Sumitraputra,
dulunen kang para resi,
yèku tan paè lan sira.

(Prince Rama calmly spoke : ' Hey, son of Sumitra ! Look at the priests, they are not different from you.)

12. *Iya padha tinitah ing Bathara di,*
yèku kang wus mulya,
wus teka ing ngalam gaib,
rèhning sarira Bathara.

[We are all created by God (but) they are already elevated (in status), since they come already in the subtle regions. Because they have this divine nature.]

13. *Nora nyandhang mangan nora walangati,*
kasengsem ing tingal,
saking mantep anetepi,
dènya mrih wekasing pejah.

[they are not concerned about clothing nor food, or the fulfilment of the sense of sight, because they are determined in their strife and search for the perfection (of the soul) at death.]

14. *Hèh tegesè yayi kang kerāsa sakit,*
kang angrasa lapa,
nepsu reregeding jisim,
yèn mantep pan nora pira.

[What it means is, my brother, that which feels pain, and hunger, is the passion, the bodily flaw. If one is tenacious (in his faith), they prove to be nothing.]

15. *Wedènana tyasira tan luput pati,*
pira kèhè iya,
ing jaman urip puniki,
lawasè lan jaman pejah.
[Make your mind realize, that you cannot escape death (because) how long do we live (on earth)t compared with the length of life in the hereafter.]

16. *Dadi sira manggalanira maring ning,*
mingsirèng jiwantś,
kang alus pèten samangkin,
kang wadhag awya rinasa.
[So you will be courageous in your pursuit towards 'silence' and the end of your life. Exert yourself (for the perfection) of your soul, do not worry about the physical body.]

17. *Pan si wadhag ngajak maring nora becik,*
lamun panggahana,
pira kuwasaning Iblis,
anguren di-parèng pejah.
[Because body (consciousness) leads only to evil. If you stand up against it persistently, the power of Satan is nothing. It is best to move towards death (to be soul-conscious].

18. *Lamun mantep sapandhenget kaya uwis,*
sumuk ing pawikan,
panarimanira dadi,
nir lara nikmat gya prapta.
[If your mind is stable, in a short time you will come to know the Truth. Thanks to your acceptance, suffering will disappear and happiness will soon arrive.]

19. *Kang anggusah ing cipta kang ngrasa sakit,*
yèkang pama mapak,
kanikmatan tan bèngkas sakit,
mung antep gegamanira.
(The weapon that can be used to avert pain or to invite happiness, free from sufferings is only solid faith.)

20. *Ing tegesè yayi ing urip puniki,*
yèn ora amriha,
salamet sajroning pati,
yèku sètan nunggang gajah.
[What it means is, my brother, in this life, if you do not strive for salvation, (then you will become) the devil riding on an elephant.]

11. This episode is a part of the description of Rama's life in the Dandaka-forest, together with his wife Sītā and his younger brother Laksmana, just before the encounter with Surpanaka. This particular conversation of Rāma with Laksmana is not found in the RK, and I suspect that it is one of the so many devices used by the Javanese writer to insert his Islamic view, e.g. make your mind realize that you cannot escape death, how long do we live on earth compared with the length of life in the hereafter, which I believe to be derived from Qur'an 4, 77-8,[16] which reads as follows :

> 77. Say (unto them, O Muhammad) : The comfort of this world is scant ; the Hereafter will be better for him who wardeth off (evil), and ye will not be wronged the down upon a date-stone.
>
> 78. Wheresoever ye may be, death will overtake you, even though ye were in lofty towers.

12. The shadow play (*wayang*) is the media with which the stories of the Rāma and the Mahabarata-cycles become known to the masses in Indonesia, especially in the remote past.

B. The Story Wahyu Makutha Rama[17]

1. The word *wahyu* is very difficult to construe. I render it with *glory* in the sense of celestial Bliss, which is believed to be in the form of light or lucky star. The belief is, that whoever acquires this, he will be endowed with divine godly authority. J. R. Brandon uses the phrase ' divinely inspired kingly traits '.[18] In the story itself the priest Kesawasidhi, an incarnation of God Wisnu, explains that what is meant by *wahyu makutha Rama* (the glory of Rama's crown) is in fact *the teachings of Rāma to Vibisana* called the Astabrata,[19] which is the same found in the RK.[20] Below is the outline of the story.

2. King Duryodana of the kingdom of Hastina had a dream one night, in which the deities informed him that the *wahyu makutha Rama* (WMR) would be descended to earth. Whoever was lucky enough to obtain it, would become an universal king endowed with divine authority to rule the world. After deliberations with Priest Drona and the grandvizier it was decided to send a task-force under the leadership of the king of Awangga, King Karna, to the mountain Kutharunggu,[21] to search for the *wahyu*. King Karna found Priest Kesawasidhi with Hanuman and his brothers has hermits at the hermitage of Kutharunggu. King Karna wanted to force the priest to move to the capital-city of Hastina, who refused and battle ensued. Karna, unable to capture the priest, wanted to shoot him with his arrow called wijayadanu but the arrow was intercepted in mid-air by Hanuman.[22] Karna lost courage and escaped from the battleground, leaving the army which returned to the capital city. Hanuman was reprimanded by the priest for intervening and intercepting the arrow, as it meant that he had no full trust in the teacher, and causing irreparable damage to the self-esteeem of a hero. Hanuman and his brothers were advised to leave the hermitage and make penance at the hermitage of Kendalisada. Leaving the arrow behind with priest Kesawasidhi, Hanuman departed.

3. At the hermitage Deksana, priest Wibisana[23] was preparing to look for the incarnation of God Wisnu or Rāma, so that he be given assistance in obtaining salvation (*moksa*). Due to his great asceticism, his four passions were cast off out of his body and com-

plained to the priest. The priest advised them to join Prince Arjuna, because he himself would go to the hermitage of Kutharunggu to visit priest Kesawasidhi, as he knew, that the priest was an incarnation of King Rāma. Prince Arjuna succeeded in helping the four passions to return to their origin.

4. Priest Wibisana met priest Kesawasidhi at the hermitage of Kutharunggu. Wibisana asked Kesawasidhi for his assistance to obtain salvation, because the Astabrata he learned from Rāma, though very successful for ruling the people and kingdom, it did not help him a bit to liberate his soul from the bondage of the physical world.

Wibisana : My lord. I have brought the people and the kingdom to prosperity and security through the practice of Astabrata. Everything ugly turned to beauty. At present however, I am old and everything beautiful and attractive have lost its attraction. What I want now is the liberation of my soul from bondage.

Kesawasidhi : Everything that seems attractive to you once, is meant to arouse passion to the world in you, to arouse your consciousness to it, which results into bondage. You have cast off your passion, and that is the reason that you become immune to its temptation. Come near and prepare yourself, I will whisper into your ear the way you have to take.

After being advised what to do, priest Wibisana departed, to take the journey to liberation. On his way he met the soul of his older brother Kumbakarna, who was still living in the delusive world. Wibisana advised him to join in his journey. However, because of his compassion towards his brother, and because he deviated from the directives of his teacher, Wibisana lost his consciousness towards the direction of his journey. He called out for help, and priest Kesawasidhi came, saying :

Késawasidhi : Wibisana, your compassion towards your brother, though an excellent attribute by itself, brings bondage and that is why you lose your consciousness. You forgot my message, the message of your Spiritual Teacher. That is another obstacle. So be always in remembrance of your Spiritual Teacher and detach your soul from bodily bondage and fare well.

Wibisana left. Késawasidhi advised Kumbakarna to join Bima, the second brother of the Pandawas.

Késawasidhi : Kumbakarna, do not disturb other people. You must work for what you want to achieve yourself with firm determination and purity of mind in all your endeavours.

5. In the meantime, Arjuna, on the advice of Priest Byasa, went to the hermitage of Kutharunggu to look for the WMR. He met priest Késawasidhi and became his disciple. Arjuna asked information about the WMR. Késawasidhi explained :

> Listen to what I say : *wahyu* is God's blessings, *makutha* (crown) is a kind of regalia that represent distinction and authotity. *Rama* is the wise and noble king of Pancawati.[24] However, in fact WMR is the teachings of King Rama in statesmanship, which if practised with sincerity will enable a king bring security and prosperity to his kingdom and people. It is called the Astabrata,[25] which I will explain to you. The Astabrata is the meritorious act or nature of gods, eight in number, which is as follows :

1. *Ambeging kisma* (*Kuwéra*), *liré* : *anggung murah ati marang sapa baé kang myuwun dimurahi. Amarga kisma iku, lamun tinanduran apa baé, sayekti nuwuhaké woh tikel-matikel, nuwuki marang kang nandur. Nanging, sing sapa sungkan nenandur, lumuh ngrukti anggarap kisma, bener-beneré ora wenang lamun ngalapa wuluwetuning kisma. Apa manèh, sabar murahing kisma mau, sanadyan pinaculan, dinudhukan, terkadhang malah ngatonaké sesimpenan raja-brana, mas sesotya pepelikan, dadi kasugihané kang anggarap*

karya. [The nature of earth (Kuwéra), that is extremely generous towards people who ask for its generosity, because, if we put seed in the soil, it will grow and will give in return a crop many times in quantity, enough for us to eat. However, if we are reluctant to plant something, and do not want to cultivate the land, in fact we have no right to take the produce of the land. Furthermore, concerning the generosity and patience of the earth, though it is dug and delved, sometimes it reveals wealth and minerals which can make the venturous people rich].

2. *Ambeging dahana* (*Brahma*), *liré* : *tansah dadi panglebur. Terangé : anggung ambrastha marang sabarang tingkahé kang nyulayani marang angger-anggering jagad. Binasakaké : anggung ambabadi kang rungkud, mancasi kang malang-malang, miwah ambrastha dur angkara.* [The nature of Fire (Brahma is the Javanese God of Fire), namely always acting as the destroyer, which means, always destroying all kinds of misconduct which are against the universal Law. It can be said, that Fire always clears up the obstructions, removing the obstacles and annihilating the evil-doers].

3. *Ambeging samirana* (*Bayu*), *liré : adil paramarta. Kabèh sasana sato, jalma, tetuwuhan, sayekti anggung sinartan ing samirana. Tumrap Naréndra among ing kawula dasih, anom tuwa agung alit, tansah dén énaki tyasè, ingunggar atiné.* [The nature of Wind (Bayu), namely just and unselfish. Everything, human beings, fauna and flora always get benefit from the wind. A king who has to rule over his people, he should be always friendly and sympathetic, be he young or old, great or small.]

4. *Ambeging tirta* (*Baruna*), *liré : anggung ngutamakaké rasa sapadhapadha. Jer tirta iku tansah watak warata. Ora ana lumahing tirta kang legok mendhukul kajaba yèn kena sarana.* [The nature of Water (Baruna), that is always cultivating good fellowship, because the surface of water is always level, except affected by instrumentalities.]

5. *Ambeging akasa* (*Indra*), *liré : tansah momot amengku marang saliring kahanan. Ora ana akasa kang sesak kadunungan. Tumrap ambeging Naréndra kang sarjana sujanéng budi, binasakakè anglangut jembar budiné, datan gaduk jinajagan sawenèhing janma.* [The nature of space (Indra), that is always able to accommodate

every situation. Space is always roomy. A king who is good and an intellectual, it can be said, that he is infinite and cannot be measured by anyone.]

6. *Ambeging candra* (*Candra*), *liré : anggung madhangi satebaning bawana. Tumrap lelabuhaning Nata, among ing kawula dasih, tansah mamardi marang pangawikan ginulang kawruh undhaking sesurupan.* [The nature of the Moon (Candra), that is always illuminating the world. A king, ruling over his people, he should always try to educate them.]

7. *Ambeging raditya* (*Suryya*), *liré : tansah asung daya kekiyatan marang kabèh kang gumelar ing jagad. Kabèh-kabèh gumelar ing bawana, sayekti ora ana kang ora antuk daya kekyatan saka soroting bagaskara. Sagara nguwab, temah nganakaké udan, tanem tuwuh bisa thukul, iya marga saka prabawaning bagaskara. Tumrap lelabuhaning Naréndra, binasakaké : asung kudhung wong kepanasen, awèh payung wong kodanan, paring teken wong kalunyon, asung pangan wong kaluwèn, awèh banyu wong kasatan, paring sandhang wong kawudan, maluyakaké kang asakit, karya sukané kang prihatin.* [The nature of the Sun (Suryya), that is always giving vitality to creation in the world. Everything in this world obtains energy from the sun. The water of the ocean evaporates to become rain, causing the plants to grow. Concerning aking, it can be said, that he should give shelter to those suffering from the sun and rain, he should give support to needy people, etc.].

8. *Ambeging kartika* (*Rodra*), *liré : santosa ing budi, teguh ing tékad, prawira ing tandang. Sabarang pakarti tumindaking jejibahan kang dèn ayahi, anggung dhinasaran wantering budi, kencenging tékad, miwah sabaring laku. Amarga sipating kartika iku sayekti tetep santosa, oramantra-mantra timbang yèn amung dèn upamakna gunung waja.* [The nature of a planet (Rodra), that is : Stable of mind, determined and courageous in action. Responsibilities are carried out with courage, determination and patience, because the nature of a planet is firm and formidable and cannot be likened to a mountain of steel.]

Arjuna : Thank you, my lord. The Astabrata is all right, but how could one obtain the same great achievements as King Rama ?

Késawasidhi : Knowledge does not mean anything, if not practised. Nevertheless you do not accomplish anything, if for everything you do, you expect reward, because expectation only shows attachment towards the physical world. It means that you are still impure.

6. After the instruction, Arjuna was ordered to return the arrow Wijayadanu to King Karna. Karna suspected Arjuna to have found the WMR, and wanted it to be transferred to him. Battle ensued. Karna was defeated and returned to Hastina.

7. Meanwhile the disappearance of Arjuna from the city of Amerta created anxiety in the mind of his wives and the Pandhawas. Both parties went to look for him through different ways.

8. On his way, Bima met Kumbakarna who joined him. Sumbadra and Srikandhi, the wives of Arjuna, with the help of God Narada changed their identities into men, and eventually found everyone at the hermitage of Kutharunggu, then returned to the city of Amerta.

9. Karna told King Duryodana, that his mission had failed, because of Arjuna. King Duryodana decided to invade the city of Amerta. His attack was repulsed and rule and order returned to the kingdom of Amerta.

C. Analysis

1. We can see here that the *wahyu* in the sense of 'divine knowledge' or knowledge of the divine, or sometimes termed as self-realisation, soul-consciousness, enlightenment, etc., is not explained all at once, but bit by bit. The reason for it is perhaps to dramatise the whole affair, because the story should reach its climax with the revelation of the WMR to Arjuna, the person singled out for excellence. From the story, it can be concluded that the Astabrata is only a guidance for people how to live in the physical world as a good man, doing service to mankind. However, it does not bring salvation or liberation to the soul, which is illustrated by the figure of Wibisana. He has cast off his passions, what is left is only the soul, yet salvation does not come. Késawasidhi does not want to reveal the solution at this stage, so he conveys

his message by whispering into the ear of Wibisana. Yet there are obstacles in the way, in the form of the soul of Kumbakarna, Wibisana's older brother. Wibisana, known in the Rāmāyaṇa as the pundit in the family of Rawana, is obstructed in his journey to liberation by his compassion towards his kin. Here the keyword is *detachment* (non-attachment) to bodily relations. Another keyword is *remembrance*. Wibisana is deluded by the situation, because he does not remember the (teachings of) his spiritual Teacher.

2. Kumbakarna, though falling in battle as a hero, losing his life for his country, cannot reach salvation, because when alive he gave in entirely to *tamas* and *rajas*. Késawasidhi's advice is to purify himself with good action, living in good company, to cultivate *sattwam*. That is why he should join Bima and the Pandhawas. The keyword here is *purity*.

3. Arjuna receives everything. He is instructed into the Astabrata, and given the advice to detach himself from his actions with a pure mind. Yet he still has to pass a test. Arjuna has to return the arrow Wijayadanu to his original (?) owner. I put a question mark behind the word original, because in the *wayang*-story ' The birth of Ghatotkaca ', Karna receives from Narada the arrow Wijayadanu by default. Narada must give the arrow to Arjuna, but because Karna and Arjuna look so much alike, he gives the arrow to the wrong man. Karna and Arjuna are destined to meet in the great war (Bharatayudha) and one of them will be killed by the other with an arrow. The arrow that will kill Arjuna is the Wijayadanu, the one which will kill Karna is the Pasupati. Now priest Késawasidhi asks Arjuna to return the arrow which is foreordained to kill him to the man who will be his opponent in battle. Nevertheless Arjuna accomplishes his assignment with flying colours. The keywords here are *truthfulness* (*temen*), *beneficence* (*rila*) and *beatitude* (*budi luhur*).

4. Summing up the keywords so far are : a remembrance of the Spiritual Teacher, *b*. service to mankind, *c*. truthfulness, *d*. beneficence, *e*. beatitude, *f*. non-attachment and *g*. purity. By preservering into the practice of these conduct, man can gain liberation (*mukti*).

5. A word or two should be referred to the other party in the story, namely the kings Duryodana and Karna. They represent the bodyconscious man, who identify themselves with brutal force and greed, which only lead to evil, defeat and humiliation.

6. Finally the anti-climax, the re-union of Arjuna with his wives and brothers and Kresna (Késawasidhi) with kith and kin, which symbolizes the transition from the reality within to the reality without [26].

D. Conclusion

1. Looking more closely into the Astabrata and the path to unison with God, probably we can deduce that the story of the WMR is still very close to the notions contained in the RK and the Serat Rama. There are some variations of course, e.g. Agni and Brahma, Yama and Rudra, etc., and I think it will be very interesting for further study. The variations might suggest a change in the concepts of morality, etc., However for the time being we can say that it is a kind of teaching of how to live by the good path, in preparation to more ambitious objectives, the homeward journey to salvation (*niwreti-marga*).

2. Thus in conclusion it is justified to say, that one of the main reasons of the writing of the story of Rama, since the time of Balitung's reign down to the 20th century, has been the inculcation of the intellect of men in the destination of creation, that is to play a part in the unlimited drama ordained beforehand.

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[15] The author is R. T. JOSODIPURO I (1729-1803) and the date 1822 A.D. The text of the Serat Rama is derived from Winter Sr's edition, in *VBG*, 21/2 (1846-7). See : Soebardi, S., 'Radèn Ngabèhi Jasadipura I, Court Poet of Surakarta', in *Indonesia*, Mod. Indon. Proj., Cornell University, 8 (Oct.), 1969, p. 81-103. See also B. McDonald, *The Serat Rama of Yasadipura in the context of the eighteenth/nineteenth century Literary 'renaissance' within the Surakarta court*, Honor's Subthesis Dept. of Indonesian L & L, ANU, Canberra, Nov. 1979 (unpublished).

[16] *Holy Qur'an*, with English translation by M. Pickthall, 4th edition, Delhi, Kutubkhana Ishaat-ul-Islam, 1975.

[17] The 'pakem' (handbook for a puppeteer) Wahyu Makutha Rama is written by Ki Siswoharsojo of Yogyakarta, but he claims to write the story in accordance with the Surakarta style. See Ki Siswoharsojo, *Makutha Rama*, Ngajogyakarta, 2nd ed., 1957, p. 7

[18] *On thrones of Gold*, Cambridge, Mass., 1970.

[19] *Makutha Rama*, p. 136-7.

[20] *Indonesian Rāmāyana*, sarga XXIV, 52-82, vol. 3, p. 23-32. See also, *Serat Rama*, p. 54-23.

[21] The word 'Kutharunggu' in the Serat Rama and Makutha Rama is derived from (*Citra*) *kuta r unggu* in the RK, IV, lC, vol. 1, p. 90.

[22] This scene is reminiscent to the fight of Sugriwa and Kumbakarna in the RK, XXII, 82, vol. 3, p. 583.

[23] The younger brother of Rawana.

[24] The kingdom of Rama Raghawa in the shadowplay-theatre.

[25] Combination of the meritorious acts / nature of eight deities, these are Kuwèra, Brahma, Bayu, Baruna, Indra, Candra, Surya and Rodra. In the RK they are Indra, Yama, Suryya, Candra, Anila, Kuwera, Baruna, and Agni. See Indonesian Rāmāyana, vol. 3, p. 623. In the Serat Rama they are Indra, Surya, Bayu, Kuwèra, Baruna, Yama, Candra, Brama.

[26] GUENTHER, H. V. : *Yuganaddha*, Varanasi, 1969, p. 69 sq.

RAMA STORIES IN CHINA AND JAPAN: A COMPARISON

MINORU HARA

I PRESENT here a translation of two renditions which apparently derive from the Rāma story as preserved in Medieval Japanese literature, and propose a comparative and analytic study of the Indian original and its renditions in the Far East.

The first is an abridged version of the Rāma story as related in a collection of popular tales from the twelfth century, named the *Hobutsushū* (collection of jewels) by Tairano Yasuyori[1]. The second is a modified story of an episode given in the second book of the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, that is, Daśaratha's unwitting slaughter of a young ascetic which foreshadows the tragic death of the king in his later days.[2]

The two Japanese versions presented here are in their main framework undoubtedly derivations of the Rāmāyaṇa stories, but they have come to differ in detail from their original in the course of their transmission through India onto China, and from there to Japan. These Japanese versions are not directly taken from their Indian original, but came through the Chinese Tripiṭaka and others. It would be the task of the philologist to analyse these points of difference, and to explain the factors which are responsible for the alterations in details. However, prior to these detailed philological studies, the first step must be taken in giving here an English translation of these Japanese versions with a brief introduction.

I

As mentioned above, the abridged Rāma story is preserved in Tairano Yasuyori's *Hobutsushū*. However, its text is not without difficulties, as some manuscripts do not contain the story of

Rāma presented here. We can distinguish four main recensions of the text, but despite all the efforts of Japanese scholars in the past, we are still not in a position to present its Critical Edition. However, according to the longer versions, there is no doubt about the fact that the story of the unnamed king in the *Hobutsushū* is a derivation of the Rāma story. A tentative English translation of the version is as follows[3] :

Once upon a time, when the Tathāgata Śākyamuni was king of a great and famous kingdom in India, there was order in the kingdom and the people enjoyed peace. At that time there was in his neighbourhood a kingdom by the name of Kyūshi,[4] where the people suffered greatly from famine—so much so that the seeds of the five cereals had died out, and that the word 'food' was not even heard. On account of this, the streets were full of corpses and most of the people were starving to death. The people of the country of Kyūshi met in council, and said to each other ; 'Rather than meet out ends in idleness, let us by all means survive a famine by invading the great country in our neighbourhood and taking grain from them ; chance may favour us in battle despite the minority of our troops, because it is a matter of primary importance to manage to survive even for a day.' Thus, they startde to invade. The people of the glorious country heard of this, but possessing full confidence in their own power, they were willing to fight against the invaders.

The king, Tathāgata Śākyamuni heard of his people's plan, summoned his ministers and court-nobles, and expressed to them his earnest desire not to fight. He thought that warfare necessarily results in killing and the death of many. The ministers answered him ; 'Despite your Imperial Command it is not us, but the enemy who have challenged the war. Personally, we are reluctant to fight, yet the country in our neighbourhood threatens us with invasion. If we do not take a step in this issue, we may perish under the unjust invasion of the enemy'.

The King communicated the matter secretly to the queen. He said to her ; 'As king, if I am willing to fight, it will mean the slaughter of many people. I wish to retreat to the depths of a mountain and practise the Buddhist *dharma*. What do you think of this ?'

The queen answered ; 'I have lived with you for many years. How would it be possible for me to part with you ?' The king said ; 'Since you are a lady, the enemy would never kill you—not even when they invade our country. You should consider this carefully'. He tried to persuade her over and over again (so that she would remain in the capital). Despite his repeated words, the queen did not comply and finally accompanied him to the depths of a mountain.

Surprised by the King's sudden retreat to a mountain, the warriors of the glorious kingdom surrendered to the enemy without actually fighting.

The King, on the other hand, continued his simple life in the mountains (with the queen), picking the fruits of the mountain and gathering young (green) herbs from a swamp. One day a Brahmin ascetic went there, and considering the King's deed as wonderful, offered his presence and attended on him. The King was greatly pleased. However, one day when the King was out gathering fruits on the mountain, the Brahmin ascetic disappeared-taking the queen with him. When the King returned to his hermitage, he noticed her absence and decided to set out to search in the depths of the mountain. He found a huge bird with two broken wings dying on the road. The huge bird said to the King ; 'The Brahmin ascetic, who has been your attendant, abducted the queen. Having seen this, I determined to fight him until you would come, but the Brahmin ascetic transformed himself into a dragon-king, and kicked me vehemently, thus breaking both of my wings'. With these words the bird breathed his last. The King was struck with compassion and buried the bird at the top of the mountain.

The King set out for the south, relying purely upon the bird's word that the offender was a dragon-king. On his way south, he happened to meet thousands of monkeys on a mountain, gathering together and roaring with anger. They were pleased to meet the King and told him their plan. They said ; 'The mountain which has been our possession for a long time has been plundered by a neighbouring king and we are trying to recover it. The issue will be decided tomorrow at mid-day. We would like to make you general of our army.' The King was perplexed, regretting this unexpected encounter, but finally accepted their offer. The monkeys gave him bow and arrows.

As was suggested, next day at high noon, thousands of soldiers came down upon them as duckweeds in a pond bend to the wind. In accordance with the advice of the monkeys, the King drew his bow to its full extent against the enemy. Being a skilled archer, his elbow even touched his back. The enemy, seeing his skill in archery, fled without shooting a single arrow. The monkeys were very pleased with and obliged to the King for his help, and they expressed the wish to help him if ever he needed them. Upon their offer, the King told them about his present undertaking, saying ; 'I am going south in search of the palace of the dragon-king who took my queen by trickery'. Hearing this the monkeys said : 'You saved our lives. We will be grateful to you for ever. Let us go with you immediately.' Thus, thousands of monkeys followed the King. However, since they could not find the dragon-king at the southern end of the continent, they were at a loss and spent their time in idleness.

The Brahma Sakka was greatly touched seeing that the King had left his kingdom and followed the principle of non-violence, and that the monkeys accompanied him to the southern shore in their gratitude to him. He transformed himself into a small monkey and mingled with the other monkeys. He advised his fellows ; 'It is not quite right simply to watch the castle of the dragons (from afar). It would be better if each of us took a piece of wood and a handful of herbs to make a bridge and some rafts, and then, to cross the bridge to (the island) the castle of the dragon'. They followed his advice. Each one of them took a piece of wood and a handful of herbs and they made a bridge and rafts and thus, they reached the castle of the dragon. The dragon-king got angry and roared frightfully. At twilight[5] he sent out a dazzling light. The monkeys were intoxicated by dew, frightened by the snow and finally fell down upon the ground. The small monkey climbed Mount Himālaya and returned with a branch from a tree called 'The King of Great Herbs'. No sooner had he touched the fallen intoxicated monkeys with it than they recovered from their intoxication and revived with greater power than before. They attacked the dragons. The king of the dragons was blazing with the light, but was met by the glorious King who started shooting arrows. Pierced by an arrow from the glorious King, the dragon-king fell among the monkeys. Seeing this, the lesser dragons fled without fighting. The monkeys entered the castle of the dragon, rescued the queen, and returned to the mountain with a booty of seven jewels.

At this time the king of the kingdom of Kyūshi died, and people of many countries, big and small, secretly invited the King and made him king of both countries.

It is a wonder that monkeys were able to attack the castle of the dragons and kill the king of dragons. It is only possible by means of a prayer with a vow (*praṇidhāna* ?). Details are given in the canon, *liu-po-lo-mi-ching* (Rokuharamitsu-kyo, Six pāramitā sūtra?).

In the above translation of the *Hobutsushū*, we notice several points of similarity with the Rāma story as told in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa.[6]

First, the king retreats to the woods with his queen, though not because of banishment by the father Daśaratha, but through his fear of killing people in battle. The motive here is more religious than its Indian original, for it is for the sake of practising *ahiṃsā.*

Second, there is the abduction of the queen by the Brahmin ascetic in disguise, though we have no motif of golden deer, as in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, but an account of abduction in the husband's absence. Neither do we have a person corresponding to Lakṣmaṇa here.

Third, the huge bird which lies seriously wounded in the road and which points out the way taken by the abductor corresponds to Jaṭāyus. The abductor was actually Rāvaṇa in disguise, but here he appears as a king of dragons (*nāga-rāja*) instead of the *rākṣasa*.

Fourth, the king's unexpected encounter with a group of monkeys, his assistance in their endeavour to recover their lost kingdom, and the agreement of monkeys to help the king in return are the same as the account in the Indian original. This reminds us of the mutual assistance between Rāma and Sugrīva's army against Vālin.

Fifth, the subsequent story of their reaching the southern end of the continent and their crossing of the ocean is the same as in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa. But here we notice another motif interposed ; Sakka Indra's favour and his transformation into a clever little monkey who suggests the way to construct a bridge.

Sixth, the attack of the monkey-army on the *nāga-bhavana*, and the encounter with the *nāga-rāja* who uses a mystic weapon with the result of extirpating the monkey-army, are on the same lines as the Indian original. The latter especially corresponds to Indrajit's attack on Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who fell down upon the earth after being struck with the weapon.

Seventh, the subsequent story of the fetching of a branch of the *mahāoṣadhi* tree in the Himālaya by the little clever monkey, that is, Indra in disguise, reminds us of Jāmbuvat's suggestion to Hanumat to fetch the four kinds of herbs in the mountain of medical herbs given in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa 6.61.22 ff.

Eighth, the account of the King's arrow killing the *nāga-rāja*, and the account of the recovery of the queen are the same as Rāma's victory over Rāvaṇa and his rescue of Sītā, as given in the Indian original.

Ninth, the king's glorious return to his hermitage, and people's entreatment of his becoming the lord of the two countries make up a happy ending of the Japanese version, whereas the Indian original has the later stories of Rāma's second parting with Sītā, of the Vālmīki's hermitage, of Kuśa and Lava, and so forth.

Besides these comparisons of the Far-Eastern descendant of the Rāma story and its Indian original, another question arises ; From what source was this Japanese version of the Rāma story actually derived ? The author, Tairano Yasuyori, says in the last passage that the details are given in the canon, *liu-po-lo-mi-ching*, and thus, if we accept his statement, we may conclude that our version was derived from the Chinese version as given in the *liu-po-lo-mi-ching*. The portion of the *liu-po-lo-mi-ching*, another name of *liu-tu-tsi-ching* (the Six pāramitā-sūtra), [7] which contains a Chinese version of the Rāma story, has been translated into English by Raghu Vira and Ch. Yamamoto under the title of '*Jātaka of an Unnamed King*'.[8] However, if we compare this

Chinese version with that of our author carefully, we find that they differ in some details. Let us list these points of differentiation.

(1) In the Chinese version, the King of the neighbouring country is specified as his maternal uncle, and he is said to be greedy and shameless. There is no motif of famine as in the Japanese version, but the King launches the invasion purely out of greed and cruelty.

(2) The Chinese version dispenses with the account of the queen's earnest wishes to accompany her husband, the glorious King, which we find in the Japanese version.

(3) The decsriptions of the abduction scene are different. In the Chinese version, the Jaṭāyus' dwelling is narrated in full, and according to this the dragon-king is said to have broken the right wing of the bird instead of both wings, as is told in the Japanese version.

(4) In the Chinese version, the figure equivalent to Vālin is specified as an uncle of the monkey King, whereas in the Japanese version, such a relationship is not mentioned.

(5) The Chinese version ascribes the same lot of being maltreated by the maternal uncle to the King and the monkey chief. This similarity of their sufferings unites them and provokes their mutual assistance, but there is no such account in the Japanese version.

(6) In the Chinese version, the details of the queen's abduction are related by a sick bird after the battle of the monkey-relatives has taken place, whereas the Japanese version puts this event before the king's encounter with the monkeys as in the Indian original.

(7) The story of Indra's transformation into a small monkey, equivalent to Hanumat, is told in both the Chinese and Japanese versions, but the latter gives a more detailed description of how he is moved to taking such step, whereas the former account adds that he suffers from itching.[9]

(8) The accounts of the monkeys crossing the ocean differ. According to the Chinese version, they fill up the ocean with stones until it becomes a high mountain.

(9) The account of how the small monkey heals the fallen monkey-soldiers are also different. In the Chinese version, he does not go to Mt. Himālaya to fetch a branch from the tree, but simply puts a heavenly medicine in the noses of the monkey soldiers.

(10) The Chinese version gives a more detailed account of the small monkey's deeds, e.g., encouraging the king in battle unlocking the gate-bolt of the *nāga-bhavana*, and bringing the queen out of the castle.

(11) The Chinese version tells us of the queen's ordeal after the king has returned to the capital.

(12) The story is told in the Japanese version as an illustration of the power of vow (*praṇidhāna*), whereas in the Chinese version it is used to illustrate perseverance (*kṣānti*), as one of the six *pāramitā*-s.

These diverging points naturally lead us to suspect that the Chinese version is not the direct source of the Japanese Rāma story. In some points, our version is closer to the Indian original than the Chinese version. Then, we face the problem of how to explain these points of divergence. Though we have no literal on historical evidence to explain these points, the following two possibilities must be considered.

First, the text or manuscript, which our author used as a guide when he wrote the Japanese Rāma story may have been other than the Chinese version, even though he actually mentions that the details are given in the canon *liu-po-lo-mi-ching*, and his direct source may have been lost.

Second, our author may have known some oral traditions which were prevalent at the time apart from the textual ones. Mediaeval Japanese history clearly tells us that several Indians reached Japan either from India or from South-East Asia from the eighth century onwards.[10] The most famous among them was an Indian Brahmin, Bharadvāja Bodhisena by name, who enjoyed imperial patronage, and performed a special service at the time of the eye-opening ceremony of the great statue of Buddha in the capital city of Nara in 750 A.D. This Indian Brahmin seems to have been a famous figure as he is referred to in a verse of the

Manyōshū, the oldest collection of Japanese poetrics. These Indians must have known the Rāma stories prevalent either in India or in South-East Asia before they came to Japan and they may have told these Rāma stories to the Japanese while they were in Japan. Though we are not in a position to prove this with textual evidence, it may not be quite out of place to make the conjecture that some Rāma stories may have been told to Japanese folks by these Indian immigrants since the eighth century, and had become well-known folk-tales among them by the twelfth century, when our author composed his ' Hobutsushū '.

II

A second textual derivation from the Rāmāyaṇa in Japan is preserved in another collection of tales, named *Sambo-ekotoba* (Notes on the pictures of the three-jewels), by Minamotono Tamenori in the tenth century. The book was originally intended to serve as a caption-story for paintings, as the author himself says in the introduction that he made this in order to console a princess by explaining the meaning of some picture-scrolls. Unfortunately, the picture-scroll itself has been lost, and only these caption-stories are preserved for us.

Now, in the second book of the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa (2.56 ff.) we have a story of a young ascetic whom the young Daśaratha as a *śabda-vedhin* killed unwittingly. The ascetic had been taking care of his old blind parents in the depths of a mountain. The ascetic's father, out of lament for his departed son, cursed the king so that the king himself in his old age would share the same fate as this poor old man, and with these words the old man breathed his last.

We have also the frame of this story in the Pāli Jātaka 540 (Sāma Jātaka) and in the Syāmaka Jātaka in the Mahāvastu-avadāna,[11] although the story in these Buddhist versions differs from that of the Rāmāyaṇa, having a happy ending and moulded into a didactic story with recommendation for *kṣātni* (perseverence) and with emphasis upon the merit of the son's devoted attendance upon his parents.

These Indian versions, moulded into a moralistic story by the Buddhists, have their counterpart in Chinese Buddhist Literature, and from there the story was transplanted in Japan, and became quite popular as a piece of Mediaeval Japanese Literature.[12]

I shall give below a tentative translation of a passage in the *Samboekotoba* which derived from this frame-story given in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa.[13]

Once upon a time there lived a rich merchant couple in the country of Kaira.[14] As they advanced in age, they lost their eyesight. They had a son, whose name was Semu (or *Z*enshin). He was fond of the practice of the ten virtues, and served his aged parents faithfully. Though the old couple had for a long time a desire to retreat into the depths of a mountain with a view to practising the Buddhist *dharma*, they did not materialize their desire, passing their time idly at home, for they feared to part with their only son and lose someone who would look after them. The son, Semu, (knowing their intention), said to them ; 'What prevents you from fulfilling your long cherished desire thinking of me? Everything in this world is transitory. Time passes, consuming a span of man's life. It would be better for you to accomplish your wish as soon as possible. I will accompany you to take personal care of you'. The parents were delighted greatly, and immediately he proceeded to dispose off their property, and gave all their possessions to the poor. Semu, the son, took his parents to the depths of a mountain, and settled them there. He built a simple hermitage made of grass, and prepared for them a bed of mugwort. He would take water from a ravine and gather fruits from the mountain. Everyday, early in the morning he would leave home in search of fruits, but would never eat them before (his parents). At night he would wake up thrice in order to see if they felt chilly, or whether they slept in warmth. In this way he passed his years attending to his parents, and even birds and beasts were moved to tears by his deep filial affection.

One day, the parents asked him for some water. He put on a coat made of deer-hide, and with a jar in hand went down to a ravine. As he was stooping down to draw water (there), he happened to come across a herd of deer drinking water, and became indistinguishable from them because of the deer-hide he was wearing. At that very moment the king (of Kaira country) was out hunting (and was around that area). He shot his arrow aiming at the deer, but it pierced the heart of Semu by mistake. On falling down upon the ground he cried out ; 'Who is it that killed three persons with a single arrow ? Elephants are killed for their tusk, a rhinoceros is killed for its horn.[15] There is no gain in killing me. For what reason had I to be killed ?' On hearing this (human) voice, the king realized that it was not a deer, but a man that he had struck. Descending from his horse he approached him in amazement.

The king said : 'Who are you ? I shot an arrow, mistaking you for a deer because your form was indistinguishable from those of the deer.' He replied ; 'I am one who lives in this mountain, taking care of my old parents'. The king wept together with the others around him. At this moment a sudden and strong wind arose, blowing branches of the trees. Thousands of the birds cried in sorrow, and beasts ran and roared vehemently. Daylight dimmed, there was thunder and the earth shook. More terrified than before (with these evil portents), breaking into tears, the king said ; 'Alas, I have commited a grevious sin, killing this filial son by mistake. It pities me that I have incurred a grave sin, seeking scanty pleasure. How can I ever cure your wound ?'

He tried to pull out the arrow from the wound, but he could not for it pierced deep. Semu consoled the king, saying ; 'It is not your fault. It is due to my previous *karma*. Again, I do not feel sorry for myself, but for my parents. They are old and blind. I am afraid, they would lose their remaining span of life without my attendance, even for a single day'.

This statement made the king more sad. The king spoke in tears : 'If you cannot live here, I will not return (to my capital). I will remain here in this mountain and serve your parents in your place for ever. Let all deities and dragon-gods hear this. I will never break this pledge.

Semu was really delighted with those words and said to the king : 'If you would be true to your oath and take the best care of my old parents, I can die in peace'. The king asked again in tears ; ' Let me know quickly where your parents are, before you breathe the last '.

Semu said : ' Go down this narrow path and you will soon find a tiny hermitage made of grass. They are there. But please walk slowly and quietly, for otherwise it may surprise their hearts (already weak and fragile). Consider carefully how to address them and speak of the matter in advance, for otherwise their mind may get utterly confused. Please convey to them the following message from me, ' The span of man's life is not ever-lasting. Now I am about to die here, parting with you for ever. Just a single thought disturbs my mind at this last moment ; whom will you rely upon, how will you spend the remaining span of your life (without me) ? But death is the final resort of living beings, and no one can escape this fate. (Keeping this in mind) you should never lament in deep sorrow. Do not let your mind be disturbed unnecessarily. I only wish that I shall be born as your son in the future lives and that we shall never forget of, nor part with each other. Such are my last words to them '. With these words he breathed his last. Hearing this, the king and the others burst into tears, crying aloud.

The king walked towards the hermitage as instructed. The old blind parents felt uneasy hearing the noise of many people, and then asked him ' who has come ? ' The king replied ; ' I am the king of the country. I came here personally with the intention of showing my respect to you, who, as I heard, have retreated to this mountain in order to practise the right path (of Buddhism).' On their part they were surprised (at this unexpected visit of the king,) and said to him ; ' Your visit is a great honour to us. We have here a mat of grass which was made very recently. Please sit here and rest for a while.' They spread the mat with the greatest care and respect. The king said ; ' Are you always comfortable in your life here ?' They replied ; ' We are content here, having a glorious king and a devoted son. The former rules righteously so that people may enjoy peace, and the harvest is ever plenteous. The latter takes good care of us, gathering fruits from the mountain and fetching water from the ravine. We have nothing to complain of at all, having nothing to suffer from. Please take a bit of fruits here of the mountain. At this moment my son is down at the ravine fetching water. I hope, he will be back quite soon '.

Losing control the king shed tears and said ; 'It is painful for me to watch the parents waiting for the return of their son, as I am torn assunder. For I tell you, I shot an arrow into your son by accident, while I was hunting deer in this mountain. It is because of this sad event that I came here. Now, you can rely upon nobody but me, and I shall take care of you in place of your son.'

On hearing the words of the king, the parents were shaken and fell, as a huge mountain falling to pieces. The king lifted them up with his hands. They addressed the king in lamentation ; 'My son was decent and has never offended others on my account. But today what wrong has he done to you so that you had to kill him ? It has been more than twenty years since we settled here, but we have never felt so uneasy (in my son's absence) as today, because of inauspicious signs such as the sudden wind and the terrifying cry of birds. We suspected that there may have been something wrong with our son, and tried in vain to avert the evils from him. But, when did it happen in the ravine, just now, or sometime ago ? Is he dead already, or still alive ?'

The king imparted the message of the son to his parents word by word, and said : 'Your son breathed his last with those words'. On hearing this the parents got confounded more than ever, and said ; 'Our only son is already dead! Why should we now rely upon someone else ? We should rather die. Please take us to the place where our son lies dead. We would like to die on the same spot as our son.' In deep sorrow the king led them by the hand and went to the spot. The father held the son's feet and the mother held his head. Both tried in vain to draw out the arrow together. The mother even licked his wound with her tongue, and said ; 'Let the poisonous element enter my mouth and kill me. Revive my son instead ! Since I am old and blind, I would rather die in his place'. Thus, the parents cried aloud and in prayer said—'Our son is a devoted son, and pays homage to the three jewels, Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha. If the heaven knew his devotedness in attending to his parents, let this arrow be drawn by itself, its poison disappear immediately, the departed soul come back again, and bring him back to life. On the contrary, if his devotion is untrue, and my statement improper, let both his soul and ours depart here immediately, and become deer together.'

At this moment the throne of Sakka Indra became uncomfortable, and the mansions of the gods shook.[16] Indra saw through all this with his divine eyes from afar. He looked with compassion on the parents in their affection toward their son, and on the son in his devotion to his parents. The gods in heaven including Brahmā, and those on earth, all gathered together and had compassion upon them. Indra, then incarnated himself, and said to the parents ; ' This son of yours is truly devoted. I will extend my hand of help and revive him by all means.' Thus,. Indra brought divine medicine and poured it into the mouth of Semu. Instantly the poison-arrow drew itself and Semu revived. The parents marvelled, looking at their son with their own eyes, their blindness cured. Birds and beasts were delighted, running here and there, and crying joyfully. The wind stopped blowing, thick clouds disappeared, the sun began to shine, and flowers bloomed fully. The king in joyous surprise bowed first in front of Indra, and then the parents and the son. He said ; ' I will dontate all royal possessions to the people, and staying here I will attend upon you day and night.'

Semu said in reply to the king : ' If you think that you are much obliged to us, go back quickly to your country, treat people with compassion, and encourage them to keep self-control. Furthermore, on your part, refrain from hunting. (By killing others) one feels uneasy in this life and goes to hell in the next life. You have attained this kingship because of the merits you accumulated previously in all your past lives. So do not commit sins, foolishly and in vain, as your passion goes out of control.

The king sincerely repented and said : ' Hereafter I will follow your advice '. All of the king's retinue, though not large in number, were greatly surprised and impressed, seeing that the god incarnated from heaven, the son revived instantly with the (heavenly) medicine poured (into his mouth), and the parents ' blindness cured. They pledged that they would never break the vow of non-killing as long as they lived.

The king returned to his country and ordered all the people as follows : ' Those who have old blind parents as Semu does, should take good care of them. On the contrary, those who offend and injure the parents will incur heavy punishment.' Thus, all over his kingdom, people made up their mind to do as Semu. People, upper and lower (old and young) taught each other to keep the five commandments and practise the ten virtues so that they all were born in heaven after death and nobody fell into hell.

The Buddha, concluding the story, said to Ānanda ; ' Semu in this story is no one but myself. His parents are the king Sudhodana and the queen Māyā. It is because of the parent's thoughtful affection and because of my devotedness, that I have attained Buddhahood. Everybody has parents. Let everybody take the best possible care of his parents. This is the noble path. One must master this .'

This story is given in the ' Sūtra of Semu, the Bodhisattva,' and also in the canon *lie-tu-tsi-ching* (Rokudojikkyō, the Six pāramitā sūtra).

This story of the faithful son, Semu, as given in the *Sambo-Ekotoba*, naturally reminds us of an episode given in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa 2.56 ff., where the king Daśaratha relates the cursed fate of his last day to his queen Kausalyā. Although the main line of the story here is almost the same as in the Indian original it differs from the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa on some points.

First, the story here has a happy ending, for the killed son is revived, and thus there is no room for the poor old man to curse the king.

Second, we have here a motif of the *satya-kriyā* of the mother, which moved Indra in heaven, who out of compassion revived the son.

Third, in the Japanese version the story of a young ascetic came to serve as an illustration of the power of merit which a son may accumulate within himself in the course of attending devotedly upon his parents.[17]

However, these points of difference are accounted for by the Buddhist versions preserved in the Chinese Tripiṭaka (*liu-tu-tsi-ching*, Six pāramitā sūtra, *Tsa-pao-tsan-ching*, etc.), which are nothing but the Chinese counterpart of the Pāli Sāma Jātaka and the Śyāmaka Jātaka in the Mahāvastu-avadāna. In these Buddhist

Indic versions we have also a happy ending as the result of the *satya-kriyā*, although there Indra does not appear at all.

The similarity between Rāmāyaṇa 2.56 ff. and the Sāma-Jātaka has been pointed out by J. Charpentier [18] and H. Oldenberg,[19] and the oldest version of the Sāma-story may be reconstructed through combining this Rāmāyaṇa episode and the version of the Mahāvastu-avadāna.[20] However, if we take into consideration so many versions of the Sāma-story as spread widely in India, Central Asia, China and Japan,[21] it is not easy to trace clearly the process of transmission of Sāma story to the Far-east. It may need another monograph to be written in order to discuss the problems in detail. Here it suffices to present a translation of the Far-eastern version of the Sāma-story, which bears an indirect dependence on the Rāmāyaṇa episode.

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[1] Cf. O. Tanaka, 'Religion as a Transmitter of Literature,' *Proceedings of the East-west Cultural Conference in Collaboration with UNESCO.*, The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture (Calcutta, 1961), pp. 3-4. It was K. Minakata, who in 1914 first called the attention of scholars to the Rāma story in Japan (*Kōkogaku-zasshi*, Journal of Archaeology in Japanese, vol. 4, pp. 46-51; *Collected Works of Minakata Kumakusu*, vol. 2, pp. 379-386, Tokyo, 1971).

[2] A part of this famous episode in the Rāmāyaṇa finds its place in Otto Böhtlingk, *Sanskrit-Chrestomathie* (Darmstadt, 1967, reprint), pp. 112-114.

[3] My translation here is based upon the text edited by K. Yoshida and H. Koizumi in the Classical Library Series (Koten-bunko) No. 258 (Tokyo, 1969).

[4] The word *kyū* generally means a father-in-law, but here it means a maternal uncle (*mātula*). Cf. O. Tanaka, *Suika-shū* (Tokyo, 1974), p. 103. It possibly could have been a remnant of a twisted memory of Bharata's stay in the court of his maternal uncle, Yudhājit in Rājagṛha, as given in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, 2.1, and 2.61.

[5] The text here hardly makes sense. Thus, I present only a tentative translation. But, if my reading is correct, it might suggest traces of the memory of the demoniac and treacherous attack by Indra upon Vṛtra and Namuci at twilight (*saṃdhyā-kāle*), as given in MBh. 5.10.29 (*na divā na tathā niśi*) and 9.42.30 (*na rātrau nāpi vāhani*). For similar expressions, cf. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 12.7.3.1-4, Sāyaṇa and Rig Veda 8.14.13, MBh. 7.172.77, and P. V. Kane, (*History of Dharmaśāstra* vol. 2, pp. 718-719 (Poona, 1941). As regards the Purāṇic references, cf. also, P. Hacker, *Prahlāda, Werden und Wandlungen einer Idealgestalt* (Wiesbaden, 1959), pp. 27 ff. and 36 ff., and A. C. Swain, 'A Study of the Man-lion Myth in the Epics and Purāṇa-texts,' *Publications of of the Centre of Advanced Study in Sanskrit*, Class A. No. 35 (Poona, 1970), pp. 39-40 and 43.

[6] References to the Rāmāyaṇa are based upon the Baroda Critical Edition.

[7] Although both *liu-po-lo-mi-ching-* and *liu-ti-tsi-ching* are Chinese rendering of the Sanskrit *Six-pāramitā-sūtra*, and some authors may have

confused the one with the other, they might have been separate texts independent of each other. I hope, my student, Mr. Tsuchida, will publish a comparative and analytical study on this point.

[8] Raghu Vira and Chikyo Yamamoto, *Rāmāyana in China* (Nagpur, 1938) pp. 17-21.

[9] The account of Indra suffering from itching sounds strange, though we often read in the Pāli Jātakas that Indra feels uncomfortable because of *tapas* of the virtuous, or their undue sufferings. Cf. M. Hara, 'Indra and Tapas,' *The Adyar Library Bulletin*, vol. 39 (1975), pp. 139-145.

[10] As regards these Indian Brahmins in Mediaeval Japan references should be made to the following articles—

H. Nakamura, *Nihon-ni-okeru Indo-bunka-no Hakken* (Discovery of Indian Culture in Japan) (Tokyo, 1958), pp. 49-63 cum lit.

O. Tanaka, *Sūika-shū*, pp. 38-48.

[11] Independently of textual evidence, the story of Sāma, or Syāmaka is preserved also in carved monuments. Cf. for example, J. Marshall and A. Foucher, *The Monuments of Sanchi*, vol. 1, p. 225 and vol. 2 (Plate 65, a, 1) and A. Foucher, *L. art greco-bouddhicue du Gandhāra* I, pp. 279 ff.

[12] Cf. the twenty-four stories of the devoted son (nijūshi-kō) in the *Otogisōshi* (Nihon-koten-bungaku-taikei, No. 38), pp. 257-258.

[13] My translation here is based upon the text edited by Y. Yoshida and H. Miyata in the Classical Library Series (Koten-bunko) No. 215 (Tokyo, 1965).

[14] T. Yamada suggested that this *Kaira* may correspond to *Kapila*(*-vastu*). Cf. T. Yamada *Samboe Ryaku-chū* (Notes on the Sambo-ekotoba) (Tokyo, 1975, reprint), p. 89.

[15] The Indian original of this verse is found in the Sāma-jātaka Gāthā 10, and Mahāvastu (E. Senart ed.) II, p. 213 and p. 222, and can even be traced back to the gaṇa of Pāṇini 2.3.36 (*carmani dvīpinaṃ hanti*, *dantavor hanti kuñjaram* . . .). Cf. J. Charpentier, 'Zur Geschichte des Caryāpiṭaka,' *Wiener Zeitschrift för die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, vol. 24, (1910), p. 397, note 2.

[16] Cf. my article quoted in the note 7 above.

[17] In the *lie-tu-tsi-ching*, however, this story of Sāma is an illustrative tale of perseverance (*kṣānti*, or *kṣamā*), whereas, in the Cariyā-piṭaka (3.13) and the Milinda-pañha (V. Trenckner ed., pp. 198-199) it is treated as an illustrative tale of *mettā-bhāvanā*, or *mettā-pāramitā*.

[18] Cf. J. Charpentier, *op*, *cit*., pp. 397-399.

[19] Cf. H. Oldenberg, 'Jātaka-studien,' *Kleine Schriften* (Wiesbaden, 1967) p. 1096-1099. Cf. also M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen* Literatur (Leipzig, 1920), vol. 2, pp. 369-370.

[20] Cf. J. Charpentier, *op. cit.*, p. 397, note 2.

[21] Other references to the devoted son, Sāma, Syāmaka, Sen, Semu, etc., are as follows ; *Milindapañha* (V. Trenckner ed. p. 123, pp. 128-129), *Samantapāsādikā* (ed. by J. Takakusu and M. Nagai, vol. 1, p. 214), *Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā*, (ed. by L. Finot, p. 22, lines 1-2), *Avadānakalpalatā* (ed. by P. L. Vaidya, pp. 547-551, Śyāmakāvadāna), *Rōkudojikkyo* (Taisho vol. 3, p. 246), *Bosatsu Senshikyō* (Taishō vol. 3, p. 436), *Bussetsu Senshikyō* with three different versions (Taishō, vol. 3, pp. 438, 440, 442), *Zohozokyō* (Taishō vol. 4, p. 442), *Zenkenritsubibasha* (Taishō, vol. 24, p. 713), *Daito saiiki ki* (Taisho, vol. 51, p. 881), *Hokodaishogonkyo* (Taisho vol. 3, p. 566b), *Sanga-rasetsu-jikkyō* (Taishō vol. 4, pp. 116-117). References to the names, Sāma or Śyāmaka, etc. are also found in *Lalitavistara* (ed. by P. L. Vaidya, p. 115, line 27 and p. 116, line 13), *Daihoshakukyō* (Taishō vol. 11, p. 461c), *Jujubibasharon* (Taishō, vol. 26 p. 44), and *Honyaku-myogishu* (Taishō, vol. 54, p. 1062). As for Tibetan and Central Asiatic references, cf. also *Haribhatta-jātakamālā* (Peking ed., 173a) and *Jātakastava* (Mark J. Dresden ed. in the *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series vol. 45, p. 441). Partly, I owe these references to my student, Mr. H. Matsumura.

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